













# THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL MAHAN

NAVAL PHILOSOPHER

REAR-ADMIRAL UNITED STATES NAVY; D.C.L. OXFORD; LL.D. CAMBRIDGE;  
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THE UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE; PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION; ETC., ETC.

BY CHARLES CARLISLE TAYLOR

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“I will, therefore, in conclusion only say to any of you who may not yet have read Captain Mahan’s books, read them ; to those who have read them, read them again ; read them a third time ; for in them you will find the best exposition of the blunders and the glories of our forefathers, the best explanation of the influence of Sea Power.”

PROFESSOR J. K. LAUGHTON.

## INTRODUCTION

THIS work is the overflow of an English heart full of admiration for an American who by force of character overcame well-nigh insuperable obstacles and, as the result of years of strenuous work and skilful application of his superb mental powers, earned for himself in the eyes of the world the highest distinction yet accorded a naval philosopher.

My primary motive in undertaking so serious a responsibility is threefold. I am eager to perpetuate the memory of a great American ; and in so doing to bring one step nearer together the people of his country and of mine ; and at the same time repay, even if in limited measure, the debt of gratitude I owe to America for priceless opportunities in days gone by. *Le temps passe, l'amitié reste*. I also must pass on, but I should like this work to carry a message of lasting friendship to the earnest and hospitable people of the great Republic of the West.

Haply, moreover, a word here or there may, like a good deed in a naughty world, shine through impending gloom and carry a message of hope or comfort, of encouragement, inspiration, or good cheer to some soul distraught. As a shameless optimist in the throes of his first literary effort, the author craves the indulgence of his readers.

Without the friendly co-operation of the Admiral's family, who placed unreservedly at my disposal all the correspondence and other available material in their

possession, this review of the life of Alfred Thayer Mahan could not have been written.

I have striven to make it "a faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life," resisting the while a very natural temptation to mix the colours with an over-abundance of rose-water. As research and analysis gradually revealed the true character of the man, the task became a labour of love. Rarely perhaps have been found such commanding gifts of intellect allied with so genuine a modesty.

Mahan has been described as "the greatest writer America has yet produced." What is greatness? Webster says that he is great who is "extraordinary in genius or accomplishments." Of the vast number who aspire to literary fame, few, alas! become known outside the limits of the little circle in which they move. Seldom does an echo of their earnest voices reach the ears of the listening world. Mahan's masterpieces not only won instant recognition in the navies and among the statesmen of all lands, but have for years successfully withstood the matured judgment of the most eminent authorities in the intellectual hierarchy of the twentieth century. In truth a supreme test of "extraordinary accomplishment."

In contradistinction to the lives of many famous literary men—such, for instance, as Longfellow or Sir Walter Scott—Mahan's career does not lend itself to voluminous biographical treatment. Owing to his exceptionally reserved and retiring nature he did not seek the personal acquaintance of the interesting and distinguished personalities of his day, nor did he correspond, except to a very limited extent, with leaders of thought or makers of history either at home or abroad. Among his papers are but few letters suitable for publication, other than those which have been herein reproduced or referred to. Apart from his writings and lectures and a few religious addresses and news-

paper interviews, he made no public pronouncements of significance. For so notable a man his circle of associates was remarkably small, even among naval officers, and the number of his intimate friends was even more limited. With the exception of Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark there seems to have been no one to whom he freely disclosed his views on matters of public moment, and even in his correspondence with him Mahan seldom departed from chatty discussion of current political events and references to family affairs and his own state of health. Few words of serious self-revelation seem to have escaped him.

On account of his innate and intense dislike of publicity, the incidents of his daily life were not such as to furnish material for graphic description; neither did he disclose himself in memorable utterances to friend or foe. So far as can be ascertained, he kept no diary after the age of twenty-eight, and apparently did not to any appreciable extent read current literature or comment upon it publicly. Such characteristics do not make for that kind of personal popularity which is apt to invite the confidences of men of note and bring about occurrences worthy of record. Except for a brief period in England, his association with men and women of distinction was extremely limited; and even there the intercourse was entirely unsought and seemingly was dropped after his return to America.

Mahan won the respect of all who knew him well. The religious side of his nature was the most pronounced, and towards the latter part of his life may be said to have been an open book from which all might read; but even in this regard he was habitually reticent. Apart from this religious aspect, the chief interest of Mahan's life for the great mass of humanity centres round his three great masterpieces, in which he reveals the historic secrets of naval power—a revelation which the dramatic incidents of the world-wide conflict, now

happily brought to a victorious close, stamp as one of the most momentous in the annals of warfare.

I gladly avail myself of this welcome opportunity to express my sincere and grateful thanks to Mrs. Mahan and the members of her family for their invaluable and sympathetic assistance, as well as to the Hon. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy; the Hon. William Redfield, late Secretary of Commerce; the Hon. Franklin Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy; Dr. Edwin Wiley, Librarian of the Naval War College, Newport; Admiral Sims; the late Mr. Theodore Roosevelt; Admiral Bradley Fiske; Dr. F. G. Brathwaite; Admiral Count Togo; Miss Mahan; Admiral Earl Beatty; Mrs. Vernon-Mann; the Right Hon. Arthur Balfour; Mr. Clive Bayley; Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark; Admiral Oman; Commodore Parker; Senator Lodge; Mr. J. Herbert Johnston and Mr. George G. Hall, executors of Mr. Loyall Farragut; Mr. Samuel Ashe; Admiral Eberle; Commander Ravenscroft; Mr. Charles Stewart Davison; the Editor of the *Daily Mail*; Lieutenant Lemuel Hillman; Mr. James Barnes; Admiral Goodrich; Mr. William Alexander; Mr. Robert Bridges; the members of the House and Library Committees of the University Club, New York; the ladies who have deciphered and transcribed my manuscripts; and all others who have so kindly helped me and contributed towards the successful launching of the ship "Life of Admiral Mahan."

Given that Marcus Aurelius rightly claims that *a man is worth just so much as the things are worth about which he busies himself*, then indeed is Alfred Thayer Mahan worth, not only to his own country but to the world at large, more than readily lies within the compass of mere words to convey.

CHARLES CARLISLE TAYLOR.

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May 1920.

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# THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL MAHAN

## CHAPTER I

### HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

All men are born equal in the sight of God and before the law; but as touching this earthly pilgrimage, from the moment they first see the light of day, inherited predisposition toward mental, moral, and physical excellences and imperfections, mightily influenced by environment, separates, classifies, and brands them, elevating one and debasing another, until each year of their lives but widens the gulf which inexorably divides them.

ALFRED THAYER MAHAN was born on September 27 in the year 1840, at West Point on the Hudson.<sup>1</sup> His father, Dennis Hart Mahan, who was Professor of Civil and Military Engineering at the West Point Military Academy, was born of Irish parentage in New York in 1802, shortly after the arrival of his father and mother from Ireland, and was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church in the parish of St. Peter's in Barclay Street. At an early age his parents moved to Norfolk, Virginia, and he became a Virginian at heart, remaining, however, a staunch supporter of the Union in the stormy days which were to come.

In a memoir read before the National Academy of

<sup>1</sup> Mahan's birthplace, West Point on the Hudson, while within the boundaries of the State of New York, is not upon its territory, having been ceded to the Federal Government for the purposes of the United States Military Academy.

Sciences, General Henry L. Abbott records that Professor Mahan was one of the most kind and affectionate of men, distinguished for his old-fashioned politeness and high sense of duty, and that he taught his children to observe scrupulous courtesy toward others and to avoid the use of any language approaching slang in his presence. He was a man of highly nervous disposition, had little sympathy with idleness and stupidity, but was withal of a kindly nature and genial humour. His letters to his son are full of sound advice and lofty ideals. He ends one dated in 1858 with these words: "Stand up to your work bravely, My Dear Boy, and always in the tone of a high-minded honourable Christian gentleman, and then let the consequences take care of themselves. Your own reputation will be unsullied."

His son recounts that on one occasion his father warned a friend not to persist with a proposal which, in his opinion, would make a lifelong and powerful enemy of one of the members of a board on which they were both sitting. Subsequently, however, his father voluntarily assumed the disagreeable duty he had advised him to shun, and thereby brought upon himself a lifelong hostility from which he protected his friend. There is little doubt from whom his son Alfred acquired, in part at least, his courteous and genial manner and his profound sense of duty.

The development of Alfred Thayer Mahan<sup>1</sup> presents a curious illustration of the eccentricities of hereditary influence and of early environment. He was the son of a man who was born of Irish Catholic parents and christened a member of the Roman Catholic Church; a man, moreover, whose earliest associations, especially those in connection with the war of 1812, influenced him strongly against England. This prejudice was

<sup>1</sup> Mahan pronounced his name Mă-hăn': both a's as in "fan," and the accent on the last syllable.



ALFRED THAYER MAHAN, AGE 17.



probably enhanced by his preference for the French, and because of a cordial friendship with Lafayette and his family, by whom he was hospitably entertained in Paris.

In this anti-English atmosphere was young Mahan brought up, but several circumstances arose which contributed to offset these early influences. His grandmother Mahan died when his father was but a few years old. His grandfather then married a Protestant, and his father grew up in that faith and subsequently married Mary Helena Okill, daughter of an Englishman and of Mary Jay, a descendant of the great Huguenot family of that name which had fled from persecution in France under Louis XIV. Thus it was that Alfred Thayer Mahan first became a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. It may be said that he was one-half Irish and one-quarter English, the remaining quarter coming of French-American stock. Here is an opinion of himself as expressed in his own words: "As far as I understand my personality, I think to see in the result the predominance which the English strain has usually asserted for itself over others."

He has also left on record that the experiences of life and subsequent reading and reflection modified, and in the end entirely overcame, his early anti-English prepossessions.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to his sister written from Yokohama in 1868, when he was twenty-eight years old, he recounts in these words his first practical experience of British folk: "Are not the English a wonderful people? They alone of all civilised people keep troops here, and their transports, not only here, but all

<sup>1</sup> A generation earlier, Audubon, the renowned American naturalist, who, coming of French stock, was similarly prepossessed against the English of his day, also married the daughter of an Englishman, and Lucy Bakewell's warm-hearted and gentle disposition descended to her granddaughters, the Misses Eliza, Lucy, and Annie Audubon, whose unfailing kindness and generous hospitality the author ever holds in grateful and affectionate memory.

over the world are going and coming. Capetown, Aden, Bombay, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Yokohama, everywhere is to be seen their red-coated soldiery—and to them not only their own merchants but those of all other nations owe safety at times. Truly they may boast that the sun never sets upon their flag,” recalling Daniel Webster’s: “Whose morning drum-beat, following the sun; and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England.”

Mahan’s father, Dennis Hart Mahan, graduated head of his class at West Point in 1824 and practically spent his life there. He was the author of a number of text-books on Military Engineering, and died in 1871 after a distinguished career. His son records the fact that the spirit of the profession was strong in him and that he never knew a man of more strict and lofty military ideas. The elder Mahan knew, personally, nearly all the distinguished generals, both Confederate and Northern, in the Civil War, for most of them had been his pupils.

Young Mahan spent his boyhood at West Point,<sup>1</sup> where amongst his earliest personal recollections were the great Southern General Robert E. Lee, then Superintendent of the Academy, and McClellan, at that time a junior engineer officer. When he was twelve years old his father sent him to a boarding-school at Hagerstown, Maryland. At fourteen he entered Columbia College, making his home with his uncle, the Rev. Milo Mahan, who was then Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the General Theological Seminary in New York, and who strongly influenced his religious life.

He received his second name from General Sylvanus Thayer of distinguished memory, whose monument

<sup>1</sup> Lord Kitchener recommended the West Point Military Academy to the Australian authorities as a model for their new military college, as he considered it the best in the world.

at West Point bears the inscription : " Father of the United States Military Academy."

As a boy he had revelled in stories of naval life, including the reminiscences of naval officers, particularly those which abounded in Colbourn's *United Service Magazine*. This probably influenced him in choosing a naval career, despite the disapproval of his father, who felt that his son would succeed better in civil life. With this Mahan himself agreed in after-life.<sup>1</sup> His father, however, did not wish to oppose his son arbitrarily in his choice of a career, so he sent him to Washington with letters of introduction to Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, and other personal friends, with the result that within a few months he was nominated for an appointment at the Naval Academy at Annapolis by Ambrose S. Murray, who represented in Congress the West Point District.

On the way home from Washington Mahan visited an old friend of the family in Philadelphia, who threw cold water on his project, which he said he hoped would fail, because he considered the Navy a profession with little prospect, and proceeded to quote Dr. Johnson's " No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into jail ; for being in a ship is being in jail with the chance of being drowned." To this the old gentleman added on his own account that in a ship-of-war you ran the additional risk of being killed. Somewhat disconcerting for the young Admiral-to-be ; notwithstanding which on September 30, 1856, Alfred Thayer Mahan was launched on his naval career as acting midshipman a few days after his sixteenth

<sup>1</sup> " My entrance into the Navy was greatly against my father's wish. I do not remember all his arguments, but he told me he thought me much less fit for a military than for a civil profession, having watched me carefully. I think myself now that he was right ; for, though I have no cause to complain of unsuccess, I believe I should have done better elsewhere."—*From Sail to Steam*.

birthday, in accordance with the provisions of the following letter of appointment :

“NAVY DEPARTMENT,

“October 2, 1856.

“SIR,

“You are hereby appointed an Acting Midshipman in the Navy of the United States from the 30th September, 1856, to join the 3rd class.

“If, after the course of attendance at the Naval Academy prescribed by the Revised Regulations approved January 25th, 1855, you shall satisfactorily pass the graduating examination, you will receive from the Academic Board the ‘Certificate of Graduation’ referred to in the 5th section of the 6th Chapter of the above Regulations, which shall entitle you to a warrant as a Midshipman in the U.S. Navy, bearing the date of the certificate. If, however, you shall fail to obtain such certificate, you will be dropped from the list.

“Enclosed is a copy of the requisite oath, which, having taken and subscribed, you will transmit to the Department with your letter of acceptance, in which you will state your age.

“I am, respectfully, etc.,

“CHAS. WELSH,

“*Acting Secretary of the Navy.*

“Acting Midshipman Alfred Thayer Mahan,  
of the 10th Congressional  
District of New York,

“U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis.”

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY NAVAL CAREER

**Naval School**  
**Founded October 10th, 1845**  
**JAMES K. POLK.**  
**President of the U. States**  
**GEO. BANCROFT.**  
**Secretary of the Navy.**

The original tablet commemorating  
the founding of the Naval Academy.

THE boy Mahan had not only absorbed the fascinating sea-stories of Marryat and Fenimore Cooper, but had studied them, moreover, with such appreciative intelligence that on his arrival at the Naval Academy at Annapolis he found himself in congenial surroundings and a familiar atmosphere in the charming spot that a couple of centuries ago was named in memory of good Queen Anne, and which has since witnessed the sturdy development of countless budding naval commanders destined to handle the fighting ships of Uncle Sam's mighty fleet now in process of rapid evolution.<sup>1</sup>

Of the many fine buildings which add to the charm of

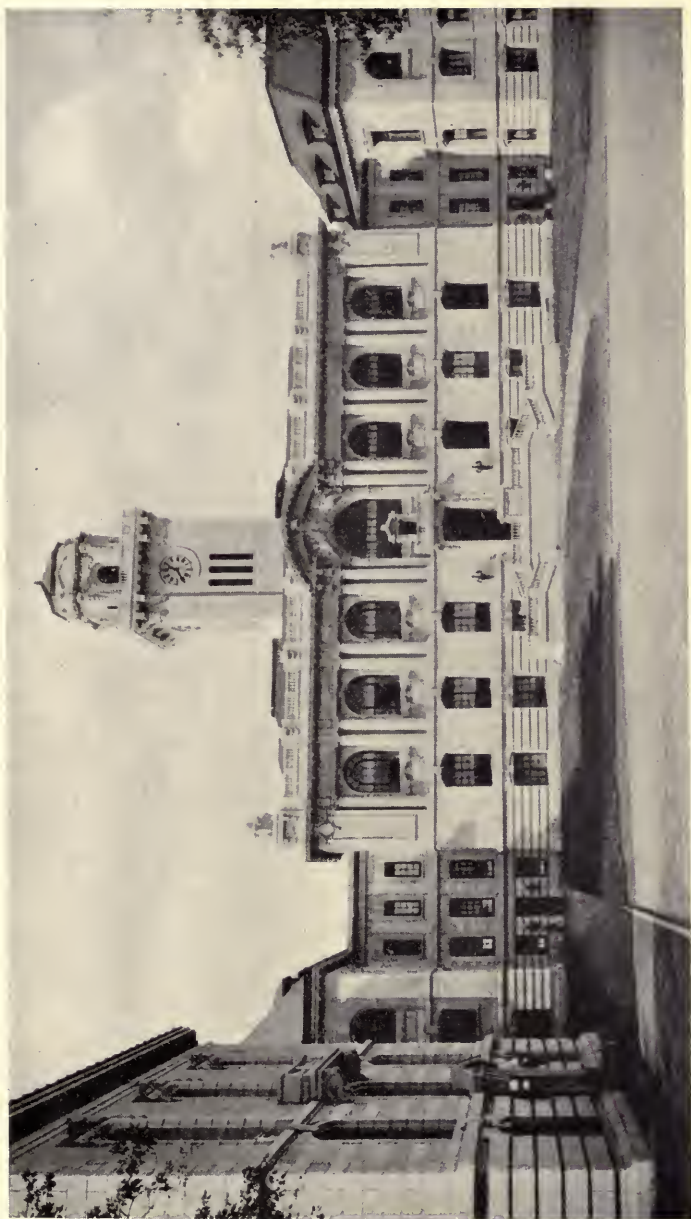
<sup>1</sup> The author has the very pleasantest recollections of the Naval Academy, of its courteous Superintendent, Admiral Eberle, of Commander Ravenscroft of the Naval Institute, the smart military bearing of the cadets, and the beautiful grounds and noble buildings. Above all, the Naval Academy impresses a visitor as an institution worthy in spirit and proportion of the powerful Navy of which it is at once the portent and the embryo.

the Naval Academy, perhaps the most notable, with the possible exception of the giant Bancroft Hall of granite, capable of housing three thousand midshipmen, is Mahan Hall, a picture of which is reproduced in this chapter. It is dedicated to the memory of Admiral Mahan, and in addition to an immense lecture-hall, the ceilings and walls of which are adorned by trophies captured at sea by the American Navy in bygone days, it boasts on the upper floor a splendid naval library. It is crowned by a clock tower in which the hours are struck in "bells" as at sea.

Dr. Allan Westcott, of the United States Naval Academy, tells us in his admirable *Mahan on Naval Warfare* that, in his last year at the Naval Academy, in a class of twenty, Mahan stood first in seamanship, physics, political science, and moral science, third in naval tactics and gunnery, fourth in "steam engine," and fifth in astronomy and navigation, and that the year before he had excelled in physics, rhetoric, and Spanish. He was then in his twentieth year. On this solid foundation, aided by industry and natural gifts, he developed those rare analytical powers which were to become so conspicuous a feature of his mental equipment in later years.

One of his class-mates became a lifelong friend. This was the Hon. Samuel Ashe, LL.D., who is now Clerk of the United States District Court at Raleigh, North Carolina. In a description of early days at the Naval Academy, contributed to the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, July 1919, under the title of *Memories of Annapolis*, Mr. Ashe tells us :

"In 1856 Alfred Mahan entered my class—a year advanced—and at once began to share its highest honors. He was the most intellectual man I have ever known. He had not only a remarkable memory but also capacity to comprehend, and a clarity of perception that rendered him distinguished among men of intelligence. He and I became affectionate friends, and



MAHAN HALL, NAVAL ACADEMY, ANNAPOLIS.



our friendship lasted through life. We were correspondents until his death—although in these later years our letters were desultory. In the rotunda at Washington is a painting, the Landing of the Pilgrims. Miles Standish's wife, Rose, is represented leaning over his shoulder. Her face was painted from that of Admiral Mahan when a boy, and it is a remarkable presentation of his lineaments as he was when he entered the Academy.

“When we were starting on our cruise in the summer of 1858 the subject of naval heroes came up; and Mahan mentioned to me that the day for gaining distinction through feats of personal daring, as in the case of Decatur, was passed, but that he proposed to win renown in his profession through intellectual performance. He was not apt as a sailor-man, for we boys were taught the handiwork of seamen; but he had another vision; and his subsequent career is a remarkable illustration of the realisation of young dreams.”

About this time Mahan was described as “very good-looking and the smartest man in his class.”

He spent three years at the Naval Academy, graduating second in his class in the summer of 1859. The usual course was four years, but owing to his father's skilful training he was able to jump the lowest class and gain admittance to a class already a year in existence, a feat which later on made for promotion, and was said at the time to have been the only case of the kind on record. He ascribed it partly to a morbid fondness for registers and time-tables, which in this instance led to the discovery that an appointee might enter any class for which he could pass the examinations. Of forty-nine in Class “55 Date” but twenty graduated. To the man who beat him for first place, William Briggs Hall, was publicly presented a sword of honour inscribed, “For the highest academic merit.” This doughty opponent, after resigning from the Navy and fighting with the Confederate forces in the Civil War, eventually became a Major of Engineers and Adjutant-

General of the Egyptian forces, rendering conspicuous service to the Khedive of Egypt, to whom he was recommended by General Sherman.

Among those of Class "55 Date" who survived the hostilities of 1861 to 1865 may be found the names of Admiral George Collier Remey, Admiral Norman Farquhar, Commander Roderick McCook, and Commander Samuel Dana Greene, the hero of the iron-clad *Monitor*.

In his recollections of naval life, published in 1907 under the title of *From Sail to Steam*, Mahan lingers with engaging touch on conditions of life at the Naval Academy in those young days, and quaintly describes his early experiences at sea, all of which were with sailing-vessels. The practical knowledge thus gained was of priceless value to him twenty years later in analysing the details of the strategy and tactics employed by Nelson and other famous commanders in the great naval battles of the world.

He tells us, among other recollections, that hazing was unknown in his day at the Naval Academy, being looked down upon by the members of his class as beneath the dignity of young naval gentlemen; although, after the war had removed the restraining influence of the senior midshipmen, it became as unhappily notorious as it was at the Military Academy. He recounts, too, the transformation that has, since his early days, taken place for the better in respect of drinking habits in the Navy, due partly, among the lower ranks at any rate, to the abolition of flogging which occurred about 1849; and he picturesquely describes the distinctive character of the snowy cotton sails of American sailing-ships which, prior to the Civil War, "literally whitened every sea." Mahan deplored the possession of clumsy fingers. Beyond a few elementary "bends," he never fathomed the mysteries of knotting and splicing, and admitted that

before such a masterpiece as a "turk's-head" he merely bowed in reverence.

Among other comments of interest in his reminiscences he states that, in his opinion, the critics who of late years have called in question the accuracy of the usual version of the attack at Trafalgar are mistaken, but admits that their arguments may deserve some justification by reason of the inexact nautical phraseology of that day.<sup>1</sup> He gives a glowing description of the magnificent comet of 1858, the like of which astronomers assert no human eye will behold for two thousand years to come. Mahan confirms the impression that at the opening of hostilities in 1861 the preservation of the Union was the impelling motive of those who fought for the North, the abolition of slavery being a secondary issue, although the existence of slavery was no doubt the primary cause of the war. Throughout his writings he referred to the war between the North and South as the War of Secession and not as the Civil War. In the following words he affords us a glimpse of his boyhood's home training on the slavery question :

"As my boyhood advanced the abolition movement was gaining strength, to the great disapprobation and dismay of my father, with his strong Southern and Union sympathies. I remember that when *Uncle Tom's Cabin* came out, in my twelfth year, the master of the school I attended gave me a copy; being himself, I presume, one of the rising party adverse to slavery. My father took it out of my hands, and I came to regard it much as I would a bottle labelled 'Poison.' In consequence I never read it in the days of its vogue, and I have to admit that since then, in mature years, I have not been able to continue it after beginning. The same motives, in great part, led to my being sent to a boarding-school in Maryland, near Hagerstown,

<sup>1</sup> A comparatively modern topic for discussion in the light of the divergence of opinion still existing between adherents of Æschylus and Herodotus as to the details of the battle of Salamis, 480 B.C.

which drew its pupils very largely, though not exclusively, from the South. The environment would be upon the whole Southern."

He throws a little sidelight into one aspect of his mental personality by admitting that he agreed with the wisdom of the adage, *Never contrive an opportunity*; his experience of life having justified him in awaiting rather than contriving occasions. He also confesses to a lifelong horror of keeping servants waiting, the outcome of a realisation of the truth of the maxim that "punctuality is the politeness of kings." He calls to mind the curious fact that during his first year at the Academy the United States Government began to coquette with the title "Admiral," which at that time was supposed to have some insidious connection with monarchical institutions, as illustrated by the remonstrance of a worthy member of his crew, who exclaimed: "Call them Admirals! Never! They will be wanting to be dukes next." Subsequently the Government compromised on "Flag-officer," an obvious misnomer. Since that day, however, broadminded counsels have prevailed, and to-day an Admiral is an Admiral in the American Navy.

Mahan records his preference for Marryat as a naval story-writer. He explains that Marryat had lived the naval life as no other sea-author had, and consequently his characters were true to life, whereas he found that Fenimore Cooper caricatured rather than reproduced life.

In *From Sail to Steam* occurs one of the isolated instances in which Mahan makes any reference to his religious beliefs. In a description of the Jewish population of Aden, he says: "I am without anti-Semitic feeling. That Jesus Christ was a Jew covers His race for me." Discussing the effects of climate and environment, he asks the debatable question: "Does beer

taste as good in America as in England ? ” and in reply expresses the opinion, “ I think not, unless perhaps in Newport, Rhode Island.”<sup>1</sup>

Referring to a native ceremony in Muscat and his expected attendance with his Captain, there is a characteristic touch of the real Mahan in his concluding remark : “ As it called for full uniform, I begged off.” Commenting upon his experiences in the East, he pays this tribute to the beneficent influence of Great Britain upon the destinies of mankind :

“ An impression which accumulates upon the attentive traveller following the main roads of maritime commerce is the continual outcropping of the British soldier. It is not that there is so much of him, but that he is so manywhere : in our single voyage, at places so apart as Cape Town, Aden, Bombay, Singapore, Hong Kong. Although not on our route (nevertheless linked to the four last named by the great ocean highway between East and West, consecutive even in those distant days before the Suez Canal), he was already in force in Gibraltar and Malta ; since which he is to be found in Cyprus also and in Egypt. He is no chance phenomenon, but an obvious effect of a noteworthy cause ; an incident of current history, the exponent, unconsciously to himself, of many great events.”

A significant prediction in the light of the glorious part since played by British soldiers scattered throughout the Eastern theatres of the Great War !

Mahan described blockading in the Civil War as desperately tedious work ; even the notorious tellers of stories among the ship’s company becoming ultimately reduced to exhaustion and silence. In his reminiscences he recounts a number of quaintly humorous nautical

<sup>1</sup> It is a somewhat curious coincidence that in letters to friends in New York and elsewhere the author has often described Newport as being more like England than any other place visited by him in America.

anecdotes, the following breezy ditty being a fairly characteristic example of the type :

“ One night came on a hurricane,  
The sea was mountains rolling,  
When Barney Buntline turned his quid  
And said to Billy Bowline,  
‘ A strong nor’wester’s blowing, Bill :  
Hark ! don’t you hear it roar now ?  
Lord help them ! how I pities all  
Unlucky folks on shore now.

“ ‘ Foolhardy chaps, that live in towns,  
What dangers they are all in !  
And now lie shaking in their beds,  
For fear the roof should fall in !  
Poor creatures, how they envies us,  
And wishes, I’ve a notion,  
For our good luck, in such a storm,  
To be upon the ocean.

“ ‘ And often, Bill, I have been told  
How folks are killed, and undone,  
By overturns of carriages,  
By fogs and fires in London.  
We know what risks all landmen run,  
From noblemen to tailors ;  
Then, Bill, let us thank Providence  
That you and me are sailors.’ ”

Mahan and two of his intimate friends were fortunate in having their applications for the sloop-of-war *Levant* refused, as she never reached her destination, having disappeared in the Pacific without leaving a trace—one of the many mysteries of the deep. The three chums were appointed to the frigate *Congress*, and in the cruise which followed Mahan made his first personal acquaintance with the coasts and waters of South America and Africa. A few years later the *Congress*, though a magnificent ship of her period, carrying fifty guns and five hundred men, fell an easy victim to the Confederate ironclad *Merrimac*.

Circumstances connected with the Civil War brought rapid promotion, and in 1861, at twenty-one years of



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UNITED STATES FRIGATE CONGRESS.



age, Mahan was appointed lieutenant. The third lieutenant of the *Congress*, expecting a command, expressed a wish to have him as his first lieutenant, and after a brief term of service on the *James Adger*, Mahan found himself on board the *Pocahontas* of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, and enjoyed his first experience of active service in the expedition against Port Royal, there receiving his baptism of fire from the Confederate forts. Luckily the enemy's fire was high, and although the *Pocahontas* did not escape damage, none of her crew were injured.

While on board the *James Adger* Mahan seems to have given the first official indication of the existence of that characteristic of ingenuity which was the key to the success of his treatment of naval history in days to come. He was then twenty-one years old. The dramatic part played by the mystery ships of the British Navy in the recent hostilities adds peculiar interest to the contents of the following letter, which tells its own story and which the author is enabled to reproduce through the courtesy of Mr. Franklin Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy :<sup>1</sup>

"U.S. STEAMER 'JAMES ADGER,'

"September 9, 1861.

"SIR,

"I hope you will overlook what may appear like youthful presumption in addressing you on the subject I wish to.

"The ravages of the pirate *Sumter* have reached a pitch that, if long continued, will cast an undeserved stigma upon the Navy. Her speed on the cruising-ground she has chosen will always enable her to obtain the twenty-four hours shelter granted by neutral powers, and thus a chance of escape by night, which can only be prevented by surrounding her with a chain of vessels more numerous than our small Navy and extended

<sup>1</sup> From *Officers' Letters*, September 1861, vol. i, p. 222. Printed in ser. i, vol. i, p. 87, *Official Records, Union and Confederate Navies*.

blockaded coast can at present allow us to devote to this object.

“Can she not be decoyed under fire, or even boarded? A steamer cannot do this, for the smallness of the steam mercantile marine would of itself render her liable to suspicion. I have thought that a sailing vessel, such as one of the lately confiscated rebel vessels, might be equipped with a heavy pivot gun, and a light house built over it, such as are often seen in merchant ships, and which could not excite suspicion. Broadside guns requiring ports would be incompatible with the end in view. Man the ship with a hundred men—more if necessary. Will there not be a probability of the steamer approaching confidently, if to leeward, within a distance to render boarding practicable; if to windward, so as possibly to be disabled or sunk with your heavy gun?”

“Elaboration of detail would be misplaced here, and I shall not attempt it. I am aware that the disadvantages a sailing vessel labours under are great, and my idea may appear rash or even hare-brained. But suppose it fail, what is lost? A useless ship, a midshipman and a hundred men. If it succeed, apart from the importance of the capture, look at the prestige such an affair would give the service.

“Finally, if this is so fortunate as to meet your approval and that of the Honourable Secretary, and you should not wish to risk a better man, I beg to offer myself to lead the enterprise.

“I am, Sir, very respectfully,

“Your obdt. Servant,

“ALFRED T. MAHAN,

“*Midshipman, U.S.N.*

“Capt. G. V. Fox,

“Assistant Secretary of the Navy,

“Washington, D.C.”

There appears to be no record of the fate of this creditable proposal, but its motive was evidently a zealous regard for the prestige of his Navy, and its merit is enhanced by the pluck and modesty of the

closing words, "and you should not wish to risk a better man, I beg to offer myself to lead the enterprise."

When the *Pocahontas* came north for repairs, Mahan, after eight months at the Naval Academy, which had then been temporarily transferred to Newport, was appointed first lieutenant of the *Macedonian*, which was just leaving for a summer practice cruise in Europe, numbering among her lieutenants a young man who, as Admiral Sampson, later achieved national fame in the Spanish-American war, and of whom Mahan in 1902 wrote a biographical sketch which appears in the collection of magazine articles published under the title of *Retrospect and Prospect*. She also carried as a lieutenant a scion of the royal house of Orleans, whose English was more or less indifferent, Mahan's inspection of the log one day disclosing, as the young duke's first effort, the entry: "The weather was a dirty one."

On the return from this cruise Mahan was ordered to the *Seminole*, which joined the West Gulf Blockading Squadron at Sabine Pass, application for service aboard the *Monongahela* having been refused in favour of a class-mate who was killed a few months later in the passage of the Mobile forts. Of this incident Mahan has said: "I can scarcely claim a miraculous escape, but for him, poor fellow! the commander's refusal was a sentence of death." Mahan was on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, Admiral Dahlgren, on the *James Adger*, when the Admiral at last entered Charleston Harbour, which had so long resisted capture. He was also present at the meeting of all the general officers who had shared in Sherman's March to the Sea.

When the war ended, Mahan found that he had saved five hundred dollars of his pay, and hearing that many naval officers in the South were in need, the outcome of hostilities, he sent the money to a friend to be used for their benefit, a supremely

generous impulse the nobility of which no words can enhance, for it was his all. It recalls Rochambeau's friendly loan to Cornwallis after Yorktown, when de Grasse's effective blockade had not only deprived the British Commander of the all-essential men and supplies, but had left him without personal resources.

During his next term of service, which was on board the *Muscoota*, Mahan contracted a severe attack of tropical fever from the effects of which he suffered for many a long day. In 1865 he was promoted lieutenant-commander, and after a year's ordnance duty in Washington Navy Yard, left for the Asiatic Station on the steam-sloop *Iroquois* and enjoyed his first acquaintance with China, Japan, and the Far East. He was present at the opening of the new treaty ports, Kobé and Osaka, and records that even at this late date, 1868, the decree against the practice of Christianity by the natives was reissued: "Hitherto the Christian religion has been forbidden, and the order must be strictly kept. The corrupt religion is strictly forbidden." This visit to Japan was as an unknown naval officer twenty-seven years of age. Twenty-five years later the skilful and intrepid mariners of the Flowery Kingdom were imbibing principles of naval strategy from his works which had been studiously translated into the Japanese language, and a picturesque part of the hills near Kobé was known as "Mahan's Valley."

After another unfortunate illness at Nagasaki, probably a return of the fever contracted in Haiti, Mahan commanded the gunboat *Aroostook*, which was eventually sold. Being thus relieved of his command, he returned to the United States by way of Suez, crossing India from Calcutta to Bombay and visiting, among many other interesting spots, the historic ruins of Lucknow. Next followed six months' enjoyable leave in Europe, and as this period embraces one of the critical turning-points

in his career, its recital shall be given in his own words :

“ The year 1870, in which I returned home, was one of marked and decisive influence upon history, and in a way a turning-point in my own obscure career. As in February I witnessed the splendors of the papal city under its old régime, so in April and May I saw imperial Paris brilliant under the Emperor. In the one case as in the other, I was unconscious of the approaching débâcle ; a blindness, I presume, shared by most contemporaries.

“ Whatever the wiser and more far-seeing might have prophesied as to the general ultimate issues, few or none could have foretold the particular occasion which so soon afterwards opened the flood-gates. As the old passed, with the downfall of the French Empire and of the temporal kingdom,<sup>1</sup> there arose a new ; not merely the German Empire and the unity of Italy, crowned by the possession of its historic capital, but, unrecognised for the moment, then came in that reign of organised and disciplined force, the full effect and function of which in the future men still only dimly discern.

“ The successive rapid overthrows of the Austrian

<sup>1</sup> “ Landing at Marseilles, I found that intimate friends were then at Nice. I accordingly went there, instead of to Paris, as I had intended ; and, like thoughtless young men everywhere, abandoned myself to pleasant society instead of to self-improvement by travel. My purpose, however, continually was to go directly to Paris when I did leave Nice, for my time was limited ; but a middle-aged friend strongly dissuaded me. ‘ You should by no means fail to visit Rome now,’ he said, ‘ for, independently of the immortal interest of the place, of the treasures of association and of art which are its imperishable birthright, there is the more transient spectacle of the Papacy, in the pride, pomp, and circumstance of the temporal power. This may at any moment pass away, and you therefore may never have another opportunity to witness it in its glory. There is a vague traditional prophecy that, as St. Peter held the bishopric of Rome twenty-five years, any pope whose tenure exceeds his will see the downfall of the papal sovereignty over Rome. Such prophecies often insure their own fulfilment, and Pius IX is now closely approaching his twenty-fifth year. Go while you can.’ So I went, in February, 1870 ; and before the next winter’s snow the temporal power was a thing of the past.”—*From Sail to Steam.*

and French Empires by military efficiency and skill; the beating in detail two separate foes who, united, might have been too strong for the victor; the consequent crumbling of the papal monarchy when French support was withdrawn, following closely on the Vatican Decree of Infallibility; these things produced an impression which was transmitted rapidly throughout the world of European civilisation, till in the Farther East it reached Japan.

“Into the current thus established the petty stream of my own fortunes was drawn, little anticipated by myself. To it was due my special call; for by it was created the predisposition to recognise the momentous bearing of maritime force upon the course of history, which insured me a hearing when the fulness of my time was come.”

## CHAPTER III

### THE INSPIRATION

"Into each one of us who are born into this world, God has put something of Himself, and by reason of this Divine part all things are possible. Men do not realise the power within them, for man is a selfish creature, and self is always grossly blind. But let a man look within himself, let him but become convinced of this Divine power, and the sure and certain knowledge of ultimate success will be his. So, striving diligently, this power shall grow within him, and bye-and-bye he shall achieve great things, and the world proclaim him a genius."

—JEFFERY FARNOL.

THE apathy with which the Navy was regarded by the people of the United States after the cessation of hostilities in 1865 and the consequent inaction in naval affairs had, like so many other evils, at least one influence for good. It gave Mahan, after his return from sea in 1870, several years of comparative leisure, the most priceless advantage that can fall to the lot of a man of letters—leisure to read, leisure to think, leisure to write. Multi-blessed, heaven-sent gift of leisure!

From 1870 to 1872, in which year he was promoted Commander, he was employed from time to time at the Navy Yard in New York and elsewhere, and after commanding the *Wasp* in the River Plate he had intervals of shore duty in the Naval Academy and in the Navy Yards at Boston and New York, until 1883, bringing this period of his career to a close two years later in commanding the steam-sloop *Wachusett* of the South Pacific Squadron.

On June 11, 1872, Mahan married Miss Ellen Lyle Evans, eldest daughter of Mr. Manlius Glendower

Evans of Philadelphia. Admiral Stockton, in a tribute to his old friend, says that only the members of Mahan's family and those who were admitted to his intimate friendship knew how rich, close, and interdependent this joint life became and continued to the end.

It is with profound diffidence that the pen is dipped into the current of a man's private life. In the case of Mahan, however, it is not a difficult task, for his career was, both at home and abroad, an open book, and there is not lacking ample evidence that in his personal relations he at all times fulfilled the highest ideals of American family life.

Whatever may have been the material source of inspiration which ultimately evolved the Sea Power masterpieces, there is good reason to believe that the world owes much to Mrs. Mahan's encouragement of her husband's efforts, her invaluable assistance in transcribing his MSS. into typewritten sheets, and her persistent advocacy of the publication of his lectures in book form.

Two daughters and one son were born to them, Ellen Evans Mahan in 1873 at Montevideo, Helen Kuhn Mahan in 1877, and Lyle Evans Mahan, 1881, who married Miss Madeleine Johnson. Their son Alfred Thayer Mahan perpetuates the great name his grandfather bore, and his father, Mr. Lyle Evans Mahan, recounts that as a child he was the only member of the family who presumed to take liberties with the Admiral, who was devoted to his grandson and spent much of his time amusing him. A photograph of the two Alfred Thayer Mahans enjoying themselves together is reproduced in Chapter XXV.

Mahan had three sisters and two brothers, both of the latter of whom entered the service of the United States, Commodore Dennis Hart Mahan in the Navy and Major Frederick Mahan in the U.S. Corps of Engineers. His sister Mary died in 1891. During

his early years at sea he was wont to write his sister Miss Jane Leigh Mahan, who now lives in New York, long and interesting letters descriptive of the foreign ports at which he was stationed or which he visited on his way from one country to another.

It is characteristic of his strong natural inclination towards reticence about himself and his personal affairs that none of his books, not even the biographical sketch *From Sail to Steam*, contain any references to his family. In his private correspondence with his friend Sir Bouverie Clark, however, he often referred to his happy life, and in one letter he says : " No man can have had a much happier life than I."

The first book to have a decided influence on his future career was Napier's *Peninsular War*, which he studied while on shore duty in the early eighties, and he has left on record this description of the event :

" During my last tour of shore duty I had read carefully Napier's *Peninsular War*, and had found myself in a new world of thought, keenly interested and appreciative, less of the brilliant narrative—though that few can fail to enjoy—than of the military sequences of cause and effect. The influence of Sir John Moore's famous march to Sahagun—less famous than it deserves to be—upon Napoleon's campaign in Spain, revealed to me by Napier like the sun breaking through a cloud, aroused an emotion as joyful as the luminary himself to a navigator doubtful of his position."

From this time onward, military ideas seem to have taken possession of his mind. In 1883 he wrote, by request, a short history of the naval operations in the Civil War. This was published under the title of *The Gulf and Inland Waters*, and as a first attempt at authorship<sup>1</sup> was regarded by the Navy and by the literary critics as a very creditable performance, though unavoid-

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of a prize essay written for the Naval Institute in 1878.

ably limited in scope as compared with his subsequent masterpieces.

Loyall Farragut, son of the distinguished Admiral, wrote to Mahan on July 6, 1883: "I have read your book with much pleasure and consider that you have been fair with all hands." And the following letter came from Samuel Dana Greene, a member of Class "55 Date":

"WASHINGTON, D.C.,

"June 23, 1883.

"MY DEAR MAHAN,

"I have read your book carefully, with great interest, and I trust with profit.

"You have told your story wonderfully well, and I believe that its success is assured, and that such will be the verdict of all fair-minded men.

"As my classmate, I congratulate you most sincerely upon your good work. You are most fortunate, in condensing so big a story into such a small space and yet in having said all that was necessary, to give a clear and distinct idea of the work that your book covers.

"Again I congratulate you most cordially.

"S. D. GREENE."

The *Army and Navy Journal* of July 1883 had this to say of it:

"In conscientious industry of preparation, in grasp of his subject and general *coup d'œil*, in careful finish of details, and in frankness and general fairness of criticism, the author leaves nothing to be desired. He follows the approved methods of students and historians, and his narrative is throughout picturesque and instructive."

A change in naval policy came in President Arthur's administration while Mr. Chandler was Secretary of the Navy, and among other activities to their credit was the establishment of the Naval War College at Newport, the first President of which, Admiral Luce,

wrote to Mahan, who was then in command of the *Wachusett*, inviting him to become one of the staff of instructors and undertake the subjects of naval history and naval tactics.

Mahan received the letter far away in tropical South America, thousands of miles from Newport. In Lima, Peru, in the library of the little English Club which extended its hospitalities to visiting American naval officers, he found Mommsen's *History of Rome*, intelligent examination of which opened his eyes to the advantages lost by Hannibal through his inability to use the sea effectively in his great campaigns against the Romans. This clue he followed up vigorously, and in his own words tells us :

"While my problem was still wrestling with my brain there dawned upon me one of those concrete perceptions which turn inward darkness into light—give substance to shadow. He who seeks finds, if he does not lose heart; and to me, continuously seeking, came from within the suggestion that control of the sea was an historic factor which had never been systematically appreciated and expounded. Once formulated consciously, this thought became the nucleus of all my writing for twenty years then to come."

Admiral Luce's invitation was accepted with avidity, not only because Mahan was glad to get away from the Pacific station, but because the work strongly appealed to his imagination, and whilst he felt he was not qualified to undertake it without abundant research and earnest preparation, he took courage from the recollection that at the Military Academy his father had successfully overcome similar obstacles. He has recorded his gratitude to the "Father of the Naval War College," Admiral Luce, for having placed him on the road which led directly to his later successes, which may be considered the more remarkable in view of the fact that at forty-five years of age not only was his knowledge

of military and naval history decidedly limited, but he was, strange to say, one of those who held the erroneous impression that the naval history of bygone days was of little or no value for the study of naval strategy in the present era of long-range guns and speedy iron-clad ships—an impression shared by most of his naval friends. A notable exception to the contrary, however, was Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby, of the British Navy, who vigorously counselled exhaustive study of the naval history of the past.

Mahan thus quaintly describes his own state of mind at this period of his career :

“ With little constitutional initiative, and having grown up in an atmosphere of the simple cruiser, of commerce-destroying, defensive warfare and indifference to battleships ; an anti-imperialist, who for that reason looked upon Mr. Blaine as a dangerous man ; at forty-five I was drifting on the lines of simple respectability as aimlessly as one well could—my environment had been too much for me ; my present call changed it.”

By the time Mahan reached home the plan he had formed was this : he would establish the hitherto little realised influence of the sea on the destinies of nations, and base his demonstrations on the facts of history, both general and naval, covering the period of the preceding two hundred years.

An exhaustive course of naval and historical research followed. Masters of strategy were explored, among others Napoleon, Jomini,<sup>1</sup> and Hamley. There is apparently no record that he studied Clausewitz, that prolific exponent of the science of war, to whom the Germans owe so much of their strength and their weaknesses. Unfortunately the immense advantage of such modern works as those of Laughton and Colomb

<sup>1</sup> Mahan named his favourite dog *Jomini*.

was denied him, and he had to rely at first on old writers, such as Campbell, James, La Perouse-Bonfils, Chevalier, and innumerable others. Henri Martin's *History of France* was invaluable in awakening in him a realisation of the momentous national import of a sound commercial and maritime policy, especially under the skilful guidance of such a master as Colbert, France's famous minister who has been aptly described as "possessed of a matchless faculty for work, neither shrinking from the vastest undertakings nor scorning the most trivial details."

The evolution of Mahan's wonderful command of the subject he has made essentially his own, "Sea Power," owed much to the researches he made at this time in the almost inexhaustible mass of trade statistics of days gone by, his object being to master the intricacies of the relations between the navy and commerce, and between land power and sea power. To this he was instigated in the first instance by Henri Martin's interesting account of the manipulation of trade by Colbert.

Mommsen's *History of Rome* had set Mahan thinking about the historical influence of sea power, but it was by Jomini that he was encouraged to make a critical analysis of the great naval campaigns and conclusive battles of the world. From Napoleon and from Jomini he learned the living principles of strategy and the close relation in warfare between the Statesman and the General; and upon these foundations he set himself to prove to the world how stupendous an influence upon the destinies of nations had been, for centuries, the military and commercial control of the sea.

## CHAPTER IV

### NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

"If with the study of military science the naval student carries on a parallel course of naval history, he will be enabled to group together in an intelligent manner certain classes of facts, by the generalisation of which he may formulate for himself principles for his guidance as the commander of a sea-army *preparatory* to and during war. Thus he will have raised naval warfare under steam from the empirical stage to the dignity of a science. To conduct the study of naval warfare by this method will be the work of the War College."—ADMIRAL STEPHEN B. LUCE, U.S. Navy.

ONE lesson learned from the Civil War was the imperative need of a Naval College capable of training staff officers to become so highly proficient in every phase and detail of the science of war as to be qualified to furnish instantly to the Navy Department the requisite technical information, and to carry out effectively the strategy determined by the civilian head of the department under their advice.

To the foresight and indefatigable energies of Admiral Luce<sup>1</sup> are due the inception of the plan, the initial foundation of the United States Naval War College, and much of its success for the first twenty-five years of its existence. He was indeed a tower of strength and justly entitled to be known to future generations as the Father of the Naval War College, the original idea of which came to him as the result of a conversation with General Sherman during the Civil War.

<sup>1</sup> The eventful career of this strenuous veteran, to whom the officers of the United States Navy owe so much, came to a close at Newport in 1917 in his ninety-first year.



ADMIRAL STEPHEN B. LUCE, UNITED STATES NAVY.



Owing to almost incredible opposition on the part, strange to say, of naval officers of influence in the service, twenty years were consumed in bringing his idea to fruition.

The Navy Department appointed as the first Board of Control, Commodore Stephen B. Luce, Commander William T. Sampson, and Lieutenant-Commander Caspar F. Goodrich, who as Admiral Goodrich was in later years President of the College. Admiral Porter and Admiral Walker, among others, proved themselves strong friends in the early struggles for existence, which opened in a building, once an almshouse, in the grounds of the United States Naval Training Station, on Coaster's Harbour Island in Narragansett Bay.

The following extracts from the *History of the United States Naval War College* describe Mahan's acceptance of Admiral Luce's invitation and his arrival at the War College :

“ Among the first selected was Captain Mahan, already recognised as a scholarly officer, and the author of a volume on the Navy in the Civil War entitled *The Gulf and Inland Waters*, but whose genius was not then suspected by anyone, and least of all, we may suppose, by himself. Mahan was in command of the U.S.S. *Wachusett* on the Pacific Station, and replied as follows :

“ ‘ U.S.S. “ WACHUSETT,” GUAYAQUIL,

“ ‘ September 4, 1884.

“ ‘ I should like the position—like it probably very much. I believe I have the capacity and perhaps some inherited aptitude for the particular study ; but I do not, on questioning myself, find that now I have the special accurate knowledge that I should think necessary. I fear you give me credit for knowing more than I do, and having given a special attention to the subject which I have not.

“ ‘ I take it the subject proposed to me involves an amount of historical narrative, especially directed

toward showing the causes of failure and success, and thus enforcing certain general principles. Whether to this is to be added any attempt at evolving systems of tactics applicable to modern naval warfare, I don't understand; but I suppose by naval tactics you scarcely mean a reproduction of Parker. Taking simply the first subject, as I turn over in my mind the naval battles, and naval and mixed expeditions, scattered through history, and think how little I know about them in detail, the work assumes very great proportions. To look up the authorities, master them, and digest and arrange the material thus acquired, bring together examples illustrating the same lessons, above all the criticism, every one of these steps is big. Yet, if I rightly understand the subject, no less could be considered adequate treatment. And then how large a mass must be gone through and in the end found useless. . . . As to preparation here on board ship it is impossible. I have looked through the [ship's] library and find little material and less that is first-rate. I can go through it all in a few weeks. Besides, I should have to give my whole mind to the matter, which in command [of a ship] is impossible. No man is less able to serve two masters. . . . My reply to you then is "yes"—I should like to come, if, after reading my letter, you still wish it. Indeed I don't think I would be right in refusing to help in a new, difficult, and most needful work, if, in the judgment of others, I can be useful. Meantime, . . . I will work up what is at hand as though the matter were settled.'

#### "THE ADVENT OF CAPTAIN MAHAN

"This modest but carefully self-appraising letter from Captain Mahan is the first link between the College and the man, later to be so closely identified. The College gave Captain Mahan his opportunity, and the genius of Captain Mahan reflected honor on the College. The needs of the College for text-books produced Captain Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power on History*, which brought fame to him, and by some was credited with saving the College. However this

may be, it is certain that Captain Mahan's *Sea Power*, produced by the necessities of the College, gained earlier and more extensive recognition than the College. Captain Mahan has generously recorded his debt to the College for furnishing him the opportunity, and his personal appreciation of Admiral Luce, through whose efforts the great opportunity came."

Mahan was assigned to the Naval War College in 1885, and a recital of the acts of petty official opposition from which it suffered for some years thereafter would be humorous were it not pathetic. It is hardly possible after examining the archives to escape the conviction that, at this particular period, jealousy was one of the besetting sins of some of the higher officers of the American Navy, and undoubtedly Mahan suffered in no small measure from the effects of that malign influence which blindfolds the intellect and closes the door of the heart. At the present day, when hundreds of millions of dollars are cheerfully voted by Congress for naval requirements, it is difficult if not impossible to realise the pitiful expedients to which Mahan was driven, to keep the War College alive in the absence of Admiral Luce, who was at this time appointed to the command of the North Atlantic Fleet. In 1887 a miserable appropriation of \$8,000 was refused, and, in their extremity, he and his friends resorted to the sale of odd bits of material left over from some previous repairs to the building. These they collected and disposed of for about a hundred dollars, which they expended in maintenance from day to day. It was only by an oversight in the Department which gave the requisite authority that some coal for heating the building in the winter was put in the cellars before it was discovered that there was no appropriation for it !

There was but one lamp ! Picture to yourself, therefore, the spectacle of the coming international naval authority

groping his way from room to room by the aid of this solitary light in company with his colleague Captain Tasker Bliss, since Chief of the Staff of the armies of the United States and representative of America on the Allied War Council in Paris.

With the assistance of an enthusiastic friend, Captain McCarty Little, who subsequently devoted over a quarter of a century to the College and whose skill and enthusiasm contributed in great measure to the success of the famous war games, the necessary maps for the lectures were devised, the lonely lamp again fitfully shedding its sympathetic rays on their evening handiwork. Battle plans, too, with ships-of-war cut out of cardboard appropriately coloured to represent the opposing fleets and ready for instant manœuvring, were specially evolved by Mahan for the purpose of demonstration. Among others who contributed to the excellent series of lectures which distinguished the second season of the College were Professor Soley, afterwards Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and Captain Tasker Bliss.

The United States Naval Training Station considered the College an intruder on its grounds and hotly resented its presence there. In *From Sail to Steam* Mahan has in these words perpetuated the memory of Captain Arthur Yates, who, as aide to Admiral Farragut, had taken part in the battle of Mobile Bay :

“ One most alleviating circumstance was the commandant of the training station, the local enemy, one of the born saints of the earth, Arthur Yates. Officially, of course he disapproved of us ; professional self-respect and precedent, bureau allegiance, and all the rest of it, were outraged ; but when it came to deeds, Yates could not have imagined an unkind act, much less done it. Nor did he stop there ; good-will with him was not a negative but an active quality. What we wanted he would always do, and then go

one better, if he could find a way to add to our convenience; and when we ultimately came to grief, after his departure, he wrote me a letter of condolence."

The prevailing trend of opinion as to the value of the past as a guide for present and future naval strategy is aptly reflected in this recollection of Mahan's in *From Sail to Steam* :

"I well recall, during my first term at the College, a visit from a reporter of one of the principal New York journals. He was a man of rotund presence, florid face, thrown-back head, and flowing hair, with all that magisterial condescension which the environment of the Fourth Estate nourishes in its fortunate members; the Roman citizen was 'not in it' for birthright. To my bad luck a plan of Trafalgar hung in evidence, as he stalked from room to room. 'Ah,' he said, with superb up-to-date pity, 'you are still talking about Trafalgar'; and I could see that Trafalgar and I were thenceforth on the top shelf of fossils in the collections of his memory."

The short-sighted opposition to the College at that time doubtless had its origin in politics, and it is now hard to realise that it emanated from such men as Mr. Whitney, then Secretary of the Navy, and Mr. Herbert, Chairman of the House Naval Committee; but it is only fair to record that Mr. Herbert, as Secretary of the Navy, in later years learned to recognise the importance of the College.

The climax of their difficulties came in 1888, when, after successfully obtaining from Congress an appropriation of ten thousand dollars, against strong official opposition, they received their knockout blow through an order from Secretary Whitney depriving the College of its building and placing it under the Commander of the Torpedo Station on another island, thus practically destroying for the time being its independent existence, to which, however, it was for-

tunately restored in the next administration by Secretary Tracy, whose sagacity saved the situation. An appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars for a building sealed its destiny as a permanent institution, for the ultimate establishment of which the nation owes a debt of gratitude to the efforts of Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose pluck and perseverance saved it from extinction in the early days of its spasmodic career.

Mahan was again to save the College in a still more dramatic manner some five years later. In August 1893 Secretary Herbert left Washington on board the *Dolphin* to visit Newport with the intention of abolishing the War College. Through the instrumentality of Captain McCalla, a good friend of the College, Mr. Herbert's attention was adroitly drawn by the Commander of the *Dolphin*, Lieutenant Buckingham, to Mahan's recently published *Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, with the result that Mr. Herbert, on the return voyage to Washington, told Lieutenant Buckingham that although he had meant to break up the War College, he considered Mahan's book alone worth all the money that was being spent on it, and that he intended to do all he could to assist it. Thus did Mahan for the second time save the College from extinction, and he had the gratification of receiving the following letter from Mr. Herbert :

“NAVY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON,  
“October 4, 1893.

“Captain A. T. Mahan,  
“U.S.S. *Chicago*.

“MY DEAR CAPTAIN,

“Permit me to thank you for your kind letter, and to tell you of my change of opinion as to the War College, after inspecting the War College building personally, and carefully reading the two articles by you upon the subject, and also your two volumes upon *The Influence of Sea Power on the French Revolution*.

“In my opinion, you deserve all the encomiums of the British and American Press for this great work. Aside from your masterly illustration of the influence of England's sea power in bringing about the defeat of Napoleon and his schemes, I look upon your work as by far the ablest history I have ever read of the epoch from 1792 to 1812.

“Your vindication of the wisdom of Mr. Pitt's policy is complete, and although I have not read even a modicum of what has been written upon the subject, yet I make no doubt you present the most comprehensive view possible to be taken of the era within the limits you have allowed yourself in your work.

“You have conferred great honor, not only upon the American Navy, but also upon your country. I have also run over your first volume, and am particularly struck with your citations from history of the comparatively little effect of commerce destroyers in bringing the war to a successful conclusion, and expect to use in my forthcoming report the information you have therein set forth in my arguments for the building of battleships.

“So far I have been so very much occupied with other matters that I have not been able to bestow much attention upon the reorganisation of the War College. I shall take this matter in hand soon, and bear in mind your commendation of Commander Taylor.

“Very sincerely yours,

“HILARY A. HERBERT.”

Commander H. C. Taylor was duly appointed President and became a stalwart champion of the College, the recognised importance of which at the present day is such that aspirants for high command in the great American fleet of the future will find themselves seriously handicapped unless they have availed themselves of the priceless and indispensable advantages it offers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The writer takes this opportunity of expressing his warm thanks to Admiral Oman, Commandant of the District, to Commodore Parker, President of the War College, and to Dr. Edwin Wiley, the Librarian, for their many courtesies, and for extending to him the privileges of

As those whose hostility nearly wrecked the Naval War College have gone to their long rest, it may be permissible to record that its history from 1884 to 1896 was a series of conflicts between two bodies of officers, one intent on establishing the College and the other determined upon its destruction. Three times these marplots nearly succeeded. Twice it was saved by Mahan and once by the patience and diplomacy of Commander Taylor. The Navy as a whole in those days was cold and indifferent towards it and sceptical as to its value, owing partly to ignorance and partly to prejudice. Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, who, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, did so much towards preparing the Navy for its good work in the Spanish-American war and whose history of the war of 1812 is highly thought of, was always a stalwart friend to the College.

Under the enthusiastic support and encouragement of Secretary Daniels the College has grown and prospered, until at the time of the declaration of war in 1917 it was a mighty influence for good. Some fifty student-officers of the higher grades were pursuing a twelve-months' course and four hundred and fifty naval officers of various grades were enjoying the immense advantage of a correspondence course. No one perhaps of recent years has contributed more than Admiral Knight to the success of these studies, the object of which is not, as is sometimes erroneously assumed, to provide a post-graduate course of technical naval instruction. The College exists for the definite and specific purpose of qualifying higher-grade officers of the United States Navy in the science of strategy and the art of conducting war, in order to render them fit to advise upon national naval policy, and at a moment's notice to take effectual

the Library, which proved invaluable in the pleasant task of writing part of this book. The author also records his grateful appreciation of the welcome assistance of the chief clerk and members of the War College staff.



UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND.



command of important units of the fleet in the myriad contingencies of actual warfare.

The accompanying reproduction of the War College building, which is of grey granite, mellowed by thick patches of Virginia creeper, gives a fair idea of its impressive character, but gives no conception of its incomparable site, nor does it show the beauty of its sloping lawns approached by a driveway banked on either side with immense clusters of hydrangeas, their daintily coloured blossoms in such luxuriance as the soil of Rhode Island exults to produce. It was built in 1891-2, in the days when Admiral, then Captain, Bunce was Commandant of the District; and the plans, which had been approved by Mahan before he left for Puget Sound, were carried out under the supervision of Captain, now Admiral, Stockton, then President of the College.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As I write, the naval clock outside strikes eight bells. May I digress for a moment to describe the fascinating sights and sounds which greet me on my daily walk from "Faisneau," the attractive house of Mrs. Rogers in Washington Street, to the library of the War College, so considerably placed at my disposal by the courteous naval authorities?

Imagine an immense panorama of rippling blue water aglow in the sunshine and reflecting a cloudless azure sky, the calm broken from time to time by the quick-step strains of one of the naval bands. Picture to yourself a plateau, rising to an eminence on the very summit of which, surrounded by stretches of well-kept turf, stands the Naval War College. Ever and anon the exhilarating call of a bugle clarions through the perfect Newport atmosphere, and in the foreground that old warrior, the *Constellation*, her stormy, century-old career ended, rides majestically at anchor in the placid waters of Coasters Harbour, with sail-less yards proudly squared as if to say to her gallant French adversaries, "All old scores are forgotten. *J'y suis et j'y reste*"; while from the drill grounds on the adjacent land re-echoes that most heart-stirring of all sounds, the tramp of marching men, their dark blue sweaters contrasting vividly with their white breeches and gaiters and swinging in faultless rhythm to the stimulating tattoo of the naval drums. Who could fail to be impressed by the influence of such surroundings enhanced a hundredfold by the presence of those twelve thousand jolly, sturdy, sun-tanned boys, bulwarks of Uncle Sam's ever-growing fleet.—C. C. T.

When Admiral Luce was appointed to the command of the North Atlantic Fleet in 1886, Mahan, who had now been promoted to Captain, succeeded him as President of the College, in which capacity he acted with distinction for three years. His first incumbency of this honourable post was, however, abruptly cut short by Secretary Whitney,<sup>1</sup> who named him President of a Committee to choose a site for a navy yard in Puget Sound, three thousand miles away !<sup>2</sup>

During this visit to the West a new administration came in with President Harrison, under whom the War College once more came into favour. A course of instruction was held at the Torpedo Station, and the series of lectures prepared under these difficult conditions and delivered by Mahan in four disjointed sessions of the War College from 1886 to 1889, formed the nucleus

<sup>1</sup> " I never knew, nor cared, just why Whitney took this course, but I afterwards had an amusing experience with him showing how men forget. In later years he and I were members of a dining-club in New York. I then had had my success and recognition. One evening I chanced to say to him, apropos of what I do not now recall ' It was at the time, you know, that you sent Sampson to the Naval Academy and Goodrich to the Torpedo Station.' ' Yes,' he rejoined complacently ; ' and I sent you to the War College.' It was literally true, doubtless ; his act, though not his selection ; but in view of the cold comfort and the petard with which he there favored me, for Whitney to fancy himself a patron to me, except on a Johnsonian definition of the word, was as humorous a performance as I have known."—*From Sail to Steam*.

<sup>2</sup> " So I went to Puget Sound, a very pleasant as well as interesting experience ; for, having a government tender at our disposal, we penetrated by daylight to every corner of that beautiful sheet of water, the intricate windings of which prepare a continual series of surprises ; each scene like the last, yet different ; the successive resemblances of a family wherein all the members are lovely, yet individual.

" We selected the site where the yard now stands, in a singularly well-protected inlet on the western side of the main arm, with an anchorage of very moderate depth and easy current for Puget Sound. Our judgment was challenged and another commission sent out. This confirmed our choice, but very much less land was secured than we had advised."—*From Sail to Steam*.

of the immortal work which, under the title of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, was eventually to wield so unprecedented an authority in the world, and to become a mighty lever in determining the naval policies of the Great Powers, thereby shaping the very destinies of the leading nations of the earth.

## CHAPTER V

### SEA POWER

“Mahan has made it impossible for anyone to treat of Sea Power without frequent references to his writings and conclusions.

“Mahan’s opinions govern the naval thought of the world.”—  
ADMIRAL SIR CYPRIAN BRIDGE, R.N.

THESE are the words of the eminent naval authority who was Chief Intelligence Officer at the British Admiralty, and was chosen to bear the responsibility for the articles on Sea Power and Command of the Sea in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Some twenty centuries ago that remarkable Greek historian Thucydides recognised the significance of Sea Power, and urged upon his countrymen the importance of obtaining command of the sea. In this he was the forerunner of Mahan, and none more worthy. Old Thucydides had one paramount ambition. He wanted his work to endure, not as the “rhetorical triumph of an hour, but as a possession for ever.” It has. It is nearly two thousand years since Plutarch visited his tomb in Athens, in which he had already lain some four hundred years, and it is pleasant to hark back to those far-distant days of the vanished past, and to realise the remarkable fact that the twentieth century is still talking about him and has recorded in the words of Freeman that “there is hardly a problem in the science of government which the statesman will not find, if not solved, at any rate handled, in the pages of this universal master.”

Since early days in Britain, which, according to an "antient document," was first known as *Clas Merdin*, "the sea-defended green spot,"<sup>1</sup> sea power has been extolled by far-sighted patriots, among others King Offa of Mercia, who in the eighth century is said to have declared that "he who would be secure at home must be supreme at sea"; and a fifteenth-century bard, memorialising the sea as the safeguard of England and her commerce, wrote:

"For foure things our Noble sheweth to me,  
King, Ship and Sword and power of the sea.  
Keep then the sea that is the wall of England,  
And then is England kept by Goddes own hande."

Raleigh and Bacon's historic advocacy of sea power was echoed by their great rival Sir Edward Coke,<sup>2</sup> and found its most eloquent exponent in Shakespeare,<sup>3</sup> who spoke of England as "bound in with the triumphant sea."

These intellectual giants were in turn succeeded by a brilliant array of lesser lights, from Halifax and St. Loe and Campbell in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries down to more recent times, in which, as exponents of the power of the sea, the names of Tennyson and Kipling, Colomb and Laughton, among many others, shine resplendent.

Other writers, too, have since used the term "sea

<sup>1</sup> *Cambro-Briton*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> "The King's Navy exceeds all others in the world for three things, viz., beauty, strength, and safety. For beauty, they are so many palaces; for strength so many moving castles and barbicans; and for safety, they are the most defensive walls of the realm. Among the ships of other nations, they are like lions among silly beasts, or falcons among fearful fowle."

<sup>3</sup> "This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war;  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands."

power," but to Mahan is due the modern conception of sea power and all that those two fateful (and sometimes significantly hyphenated) words imply, and, incredible as it may appear, he was in the first instance impelled to adopt his unique treatment of the subject by a realisation of the astonishing fact that the world's historians had failed to recognise and record the mighty influence which maritime affairs had for centuries exerted upon the fate of nations.

In a letter to Mr. R. B. Marston, his London publisher, in 1897, he said :

" I may say that the term ' sea power,' which now has such vogue, was deliberately adopted by me to compel attention, and, I hoped, to receive currency. I deliberately discarded the adjective ' maritime,' being too smooth to arrest men's attention or stick in their minds.

" ' Sea power,' in English at least, seems to have come to stay in the sense I used it. ' The sea Powers ' were often spoken of before, but in an entirely different manner—not to express, as I meant, at once an abstract conception and a concrete fact."

The following letter shows the original conception of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* :

" 2 EAST 15TH STREET,

" January 22, 1886.

" MY DEAR ADMIRAL,

" With regard to my course of lectures my ideas have not yet attained the precision which I would like to throw into my reply to you. In a general way they are these : I think to begin with a general consideration of the sea, its uses to mankind and to nations, the effect which the control of it or the reverse has upon their peaceful development and upon their military strength. This will naturally lead to, and probably embrace in the same lecture, a consideration of the sources of Sea Power, whether commercial or military ; depending upon the position of the particular country, the character

of its coast, its harbors, the character and pursuits of its people, its possession of military ports in various parts of the world, its colonies, etc., its resources in the length and breadth of the word. After such a general statement of the various elements of the problem, illustrated of course by specific examples, the path would be cleared for naval history. There are a good many phases of naval history. I have been led, and I think, on the whole, happily led, to take up that period succeeding the Peace of Westphalia, 1648, when the nations of Europe began clearly to enter on and occupy their modern position, struggling for existence and preponderance. I have carefully followed up this period both in respect of naval history and the general struggles of Europe; for it has seemed to me, with reference to my subject, that the attempt to violently separate the naval history from that context will be something—to capsize a proverb—like Hamlet with all but the part of Hamlet left out.

“I have nearly finished, within a week’s work, this general consideration down to 1783. With the purely naval history of the great wars of the Republic and the Empire I believe myself already sufficiently familiar; with the general history less so; but I think I can ‘get it up’ in comparatively short time. Now I believe myself to have a good working knowledge of most of all the important naval campaigns of the years 1660–1815 and the tactics of the various battles.

“Of course the question thrusts itself forward: under all the changed conditions of naval warfare of what use is the knowledge of these bygone days? Here I am, frankly, a little at sea how to point my moral. I have stuff enough to work up several popular lectures, but how to turn this into instructive material for the future? I have not really had time to settle this, and I have steadily refused to consider more than the one thing at a time. There are here and there, however, glimmers of light.

For instance, strategy, as distinguished from tactics, will have plenty of illustration; the advantages and disadvantages of the possession of Sea Power and its effects upon specific campaigns must always possess

useful lessons. Ships will no longer tack nor wear; but they must turn round sometimes; and I fancy that some thought expended upon the difficulties and confusion that may be thrown into an enemy's line, or other order, by forcing them to a change of order in action will have some fruit in the consideration of naval tactics in action; and I believe that knowledge of the great battles between sailing fleets will help in the solution of the problem. There will, too, always remain the great moral lessons, the most important lessons to my mind and amply illustrated, of the preponderance gained by activity, promptness, watchfulness, care, foresight, and attention to details. More and more it has forced itself upon my mind that the reason one fleet is better than another has been, and probably always will be, because its components, ship for ship, captain for captain, crew for crew, were better. Without pressing this view unguardedly or to extreme, I think it is most true relatively to an army, a land force. The admiral will not, nearly so far, make or mar as the general.

"By Feb. 1st I expect to begin with Jomini, etc., and having naval conditions constantly before my mind, I shall hope to detect analogies; and with an admirable system of one kind of war before me to contribute something to the development of a systematic study of war in another field.

"Whether I can accomplish anything more in the matter of naval history of other epochs this year I cannot say; it is scarcely worth considering at present. I am working to my full capacity, and have to feel that that is less than it was, so I don't look far ahead.

"As I said in my last letter, don't be withheld by any thought of my course from getting any useful help for the College that you can. I would like this letter, however, to be confidential, in case any of my thunder should turn out to be *real* thunder.

"Sincerely yours,

"A. T. MAHAN.

"Rear-Admiral S. B. Luce,

"Naval War College,

"Newport, R.I."

The above letter was written over four months before Mahan put pen to paper on the lectures which resulted in the books.

*The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783* was published in May 1890. Its success was immediate, and increased as time went on. It was translated into the languages of many countries. Mahan was deluged with congratulatory letters from leading authorities on both sides of the Atlantic, and eulogistic reviews of the book appeared by the score in the columns of the most prominent and influential papers and periodicals of the day, one historical treatise, by Professor Laughton, in the *Edinburgh Review*<sup>1</sup> extending to thirty-two pages. With characteristic alertness Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, then a Civil Service Commissioner in Washington, wrote Mahan a few days after the book made its appearance :

“During the last two days I have spent half my time, busy as I am, in reading your book. That I found it interesting is shown by the fact that having taken it up, I have gone straight through and finished it.

“I can say with perfect sincerity that I think it very much the clearest and most instructive general work of the kind with which I am acquainted. It is a very good book—admirable; and I am greatly in error if it does not become a classic.”

Among others, too numerous to mention, who wrote personal notes were Admiral Walker, Admiral Goodrich, Admiral Sampson, Admiral Luce, Admiral Schley, and Captain Barnes, all of the United States Navy; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Gerard Noel, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, Admiral Sir Augustus Phillimore, Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, and Admiral Sir Edmund Fremantle,

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir John Laughton was Professor of Modern History at King's College, University of London, and Lecturer on Naval History at the Royal Naval College.

of the British Navy ; Edward Everett Hale, Sir William Laird Clowes (then Naval Editor of the London *Times*), Senator Lodge, Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, and Sir George Clarke (now Lord Sydenham).

Admiral Luce, President of the Naval War College, had this to say of it :

“ This is an altogether exceptional work ; there is nothing like it in the whole range of naval literature. No other author with whom we are acquainted has ever undertaken to treat the subject in such a liberal, not to say philosophical spirit, or to weave the story of the Navy and its achievements into the affairs of State so as to bring out its value as a factor of national life. The work is entirely original in conception, masterful in construction, and scholarly in execution.”

Lord Roberts, beloved soldier of imperishable memory, publicly announced that *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* had given him more pleasure than any book he had read for many years.

Gladstone is said to have regarded it as one of the greatest of modern books ; and the London *Times* in a lengthy review said of it :

“ The really great book which is the subject of this notice altogether carries away the palm in clearness and depth of thought, in breadth of view, and in purity of style. The book is by no means addressed to the naval officer only, though for him it is as a gleam of light from a dull sky. But it is the public man, above all the public man who is directly or indirectly concerned in the defences of the Empire, who should read and ponder over this fine work.”

The distinguished Admiral of the Fleet Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby wrote :

“ Your book on Naval History in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will be specially valuable, as tending to reduce a dearth which I, in common I

suppose with all naval students, have ever felt for authoritative works that will elucidate questions of naval strategy and tactics. It is only by the industry and talent of experts, who will collate and reason on past events, that we can hope to possess such a literature as our military brethren enjoy on kindred topics."

Eight years after its publication the President of the Liverpool Philomathic Society, at the opening of its seventy-fourth annual session in 1898, chose it as the subject of his inaugural address and referred to it in these words :

" The shifting of the mental balance in some millions of human beings by a single book is so rare a phenomenon that when we come across such a portent in everyday life it behoves us to regard it curiously.

" It is the peculiar merit of Captain Mahan that in analysing the effect of Sea Power upon the development of nations, he has also lifted the curtain upon other important factors. The principal object of his books has been to disseminate the idea and demonstrate the potency of Sea Power. This he has done in so effective a manner that Sea Power is now a household word. A new phraseology has grown up in connection with this subject. The language has been enriched by various phrases which express the novel aspects of this new line of thought. He has revealed, with a suddenness which is quite startling, that the growth and prosperity of nations depends largely upon Sea Power and its concomitants—ships, colonies, and commerce. National destiny, as we study Captain Mahan's volumes, appears to take for us more tangible proportions."

There has been a certain amount of contention as to whether originality could be claimed for Mahan's works. Originality in the bulk of the *matter* presented there is not, but in the *manner* in which it is presented there assuredly is. How great a difference is represented

by those two little letters. The argument for originality lies in the answer to these questions : By whom had there been previously given to the world such an analysis of the historical influence of the mastery of the sea ? Can anyone be named before Mahan's day who may be said to have comprehensively dealt with the subject of Naval Strategy ?

Personally Mahan made no public claim to originality, but he was of a surprisingly modest and diffident nature, as an instance of which, in a letter to his London publisher, Mr. Marston, in 1897, he says :

“ It may seem odd to you, but I do not to this day understand my success. I had done what I intended ; I recognise that people have attributed to me a great success, and have given to me abundant recognition. I enjoy it and am grateful, but for the most part, I do not myself appreciate the work up to the measure expressed by others.”

He claimed, however, originality for the inspiration of his method of interpreting Sea Power. He has left this on record :

“ Not to mention other predecessors with a full roll of whose names I am even now unacquainted, Bacon and Raleigh three centuries before had epitomised in a few words the theme on which I was to write volumes. That they had done so was indeed then unknown to me. For me as for them the light dawned first on my inner consciousness ; I owed it to no other man.”

In Mahan's case the process of evolution was : (1) the trend of thought, (2) the opportunity, (3) the inspiration, (4) the hard work, (5) the lectures, (6) the masterpiece. Mr. Edison is credited with a definition of genius as being one-tenth inspiration and nine-tenths perspiration, in other words, hard work ; and Mahan's well-merited success teaches the same lesson : *labor omnia vincit*.

The recognition afforded his first Sea Power volume encouraged him to renewed efforts. He began with wide study of the general history of the period; of Jomini's *Wars of the French Republic*, Napoleon's *Correspondence and Commentaries*, Thiers's *History of the Consulate and Empire*, and the speeches of Pitt and Fox. He studied too the effects of sea power in the Peloponnesian War, and collected from Livy and others details of naval occurrences while Hannibal was in Italy. In his own words :

“ My outlook was thus enlarged, not upon military matters only, but by an appreciation of the strength of Athens, broad based upon an extensive system of maritime commerce. This prepared me to see in the continental system of Napoleon the direct outcome of Great Britain's maritime supremacy, and the ultimate cause of his own ruin. Thus, while gathering matter, a conception was forming which became the dominant feature in my scheme by the time I began to write in earnest.”

As a result of two years' steady application he gave to the world *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, which carried the story up to 1812, and by some has been considered a greater work than *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, because, as that noted naval critic Sir John Laughton has explained, the—

“ latter was addressed mainly to professional readers, and appealed only incidentally to the general public; the former, important as it is to naval officers, is still more so to the statesman, the administrator, the shipowner, the merchant, and the tradesman.”

He sagely adds :

“ In fact the only man, or type of man in England, to whom it will not prove of the deepest interest, is

the pseudo-politician whose theory of public affairs is summed up in the maxim that whatever is English is wrong. To such a man—and, unfortunately, we have too many among us—we can conceive the book acting rather as an irritant, a blister—wholesome it may be, but painful ; for, though written by one whom untoward circumstances have constituted a foreigner, and whom education has taught to regard English affairs with an impartial eye, the book is throughout a splendid apotheosis of English courage and English endurance, of English skill and of English power, the more splendid, the more glorious, as these are put forward not as a matter of boasting or of laudation, but philosophically, scientifically, as illustrating propositions in naval strategy or in commercial war.”

That picturesque Irishman Judge William O'Connor Morris, critic and historian, who was a happy mixture of many of the most attractive Irish and English qualities, wrote Mahan from Gartnamona, Tullamore, that he had read *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire* with the deepest interest and the greatest admiration ; that in his opinion nothing equal to it in naval history had ever been written, and that Captain Mahan was the only writer who had brought out one feature of great importance, namely Napoleon's flanking operations to withdraw the British Fleet from their central position. This he considered an excellent point and in conformity with Napoleon's strategy.

The naval critic of the London *Times* fitly expressed the popular verdict in these words :

“ Captain Mahan has now continued his studies and his expositions of the same theme in the present work, which deals with the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, with the history of that great school of naval strategy and warfare which was founded by Lord St. Vincent and brought to its highest pitch of glory by the consummate genius of Nelson. Of the way in which

this great theme is treated by the author of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* we need say little, no living writer is so well qualified to do it justice as Captain Mahan, and certainly the true significance of the tremendous events of those momentous years has never been more luminously or more instructively displayed."

The practical utility of the Sea Power books was immensely enhanced by the fact that they contained priceless lessons, not only for statesmen and naval commanders, but also for military authorities. The following memorandum submitted by the Aide-de-Camp to the General Officer commanding at the time, December 8, 1892, reflects the opinion of the United States War Department as to the special value of Mahan's doctrines as demonstrating the influence of sea power upon, and in conjunction with, military operations on land :

"About two years ago Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S. Navy, President of the Naval War College, published a work entitled *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. He, at that time, wrote me a letter in similar terms with the one attached to this memorandum, and which I, as in the present case, submitted to the Major-General Commanding for such action as he should choose to recommend to the War Department. Upon the recommendation of the Major-General Commanding, the War Department subscribed for 100 copies of the work. The Department received the full money value of its subscription. The book was universally admitted to be one of singular merit. In foreign service journals and high-class non-professional periodicals it was reviewed in the highest terms. It was supplied by the British Government to the libraries of cruising ships. It was well worthy the study of the land officers of our own service as showing the inseparable connection of mutual dependence between land and sea armies during the great military operations of the last two hundred years.

"Captain Mahan is now about to publish a second volume in the series tracing the influence of sea power

upon the French Revolution, the series to be concluded at some future time with a volume treating the war of 1812 in a similar manner.

“In view of the great success of the former volume, due to its recognised merits, I would respectfully suggest the propriety of the Department’s giving its subscription for a hundred or more copies of Captain Mahan’s second volume entitled *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution*. The publishers are Messrs. Little, Brown & Co. of Boston.”

The more closely Mahan’s masterpieces are examined, the deeper becomes the feeling of admiration. The almost incredible amount of reading and research, and the accuracy and tenacity of the memory which retained so stupendous a store of information, transcend the imagination.

The lessons they taught were new.

The lessons they taught were of world-wide application.

The lessons they taught appealed to the greatest minds in all countries.

For the first time the rulers of the earth learned actively to realise and appreciate the true significance of the control of the highways of the sea.

## CHAPTER VI

### FARRAGUT

“He stands eminent among the naval men of his time for skill, heroism, and grand force of character.”—WILLIAM O’CONNOR MORRIS.

BOTH the *Life of Farragut* and *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire* were written between 1890 and 1892 during a fortunate period of freedom from official duties, the sessions at the Naval War College, of which Mahan was again appointed President in 1892, being temporarily suspended. In his own words, “The College slumbered and I worked.”

From time immemorial the patrician mothers of Britain have been wont to consecrate to the naval service of the State their little male offspring at the tender age of thirteen; but never surely was there so infantile a naval officer as David Farragut, who, Mahan records, was a midshipman at nine, and was actually at sea on active service when he was ten years old. It was hardly surprising that on his first voyage, overcome with fatigue, he was found asleep on watch. This dereliction of duty, however, which in time of war carries with it condign punishment, was compassionately regarded by the humane lieutenant of the watch, afterwards Commodore Bolton, who covered the child with his own jacket to protect him from the night air. As midshipman of the commander’s gig, he was at ten years of age the tiny hero of a lively scuffle on shore, and as “officer in charge” was bound over to keep the peace; when twelve years old he was sent in charge of

a prize, doubtless with an old seaman as nurse, but still in full command.

In character Farragut had much in common with Mahan, being of a deeply religious nature, modest and unassuming. Similarly he was a restless seeker after knowledge, and being blest with a good memory, he was successful in his lifelong efforts to achieve self-improvement. He also resembled Mahan in his unusual physical activity at an advanced age.

*The Life of Admiral Farragut* was contributed to the "Great Commander" series edited by General James Grant Wilson, who was responsible for the *Life of General Grant*. The book was well received. With skill and accuracy Mahan gave to posterity the dramatic story of the heroic doings of a fearless American sailor, who was, moreover, a man of unimpeachable character, and who, impelled by his devotion to the Union, and overcoming the opposition and scepticism levelled against him by reason of his being a Southerner by birth and association, became the hero of Mobile Bay, and the greatest of the naval commanders who won renown under the masterful administration of Lincoln.

Among a number of letters of appreciation, Mahan received one from Mr. Loyall Farragut, who had previously written a biography of his father; and the following extracts from a review in the *New York Times* give an idea of the impression the book made at the time it was published :

"The author of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* has found in Admiral Farragut a congenial subject, and has worked up his material in a masterful manner in the volume which forms part of the new series of the Messrs. Appleton, entitled *Great Commanders*.

"The author has at his fingers' ends conditions past and present. The man who broke through the batteries on the Mississippi and fought his way to Mobile was the





connecting link between the older sea-heroes of 1812 and those of 1862. In Farragut's case, the boy who had passed powder on the *Essex*, in her fight with the *Phæbe* and *Cherub* off Valparaiso, was the man who stood on the shrouds of the *Hartford*, lashed there or not, and with shell and shot tearing around him, coolly surveyed the enemy's batteries, made up his mind exactly what had to be done, and did it.

"In naval warfare there is nothing finer than, when at Mobile, with the *Tecumseh* having 'her screw revolving wildly in the air,' and disappearing with her bottom stove in by a torpedo, Farragut dared to follow her. There might be another torpedo or many of them. That was Farragut's moment of inspiration. He would not turn tail, although one ship or two ships might be lost. It was 'the supreme moment of his life, in which the scales of his fortunes wavered in the balance.' 'Go on,' was what the hero said, and go on he did. 'Damn the torpedoes!' shouted the Admiral, and then: 'Four bells. Captain Dayton, go ahead. Jouett, full speed,' and the dread line of buoys was passed.

"We cannot say too much in praise of the manner in which Captain Mahan has brought home to us the finer traits of Farragut."

Farragut's letter to his wife, written on the flagship *Hartford*, off Mobile, July 31, 1864, a fac-simile of which is reproduced in this chapter by the kind permission of the executors of the Admiral's son, Mr. Loyall Farragut, is eloquent of the man and is in itself a condensed biography. It reads as follows:

"U.S. FLAGSHIP 'HARTFORD,' WEST GULF

"SQUADRON, OFF MOBILE,

"July 31, 1864.

"MY DEAREST WIFE,—

"My Monitors are all here now, so that I begin to feel that I am the one to attack, and no longer expect to be attacked by Buchanan, although I really wish he had made the effort to test the question. When I shall attack I know not, as I am waiting on the Army

as they say. I hope for the best results as I am always hopeful, put my shoulder to the wheel with my best judgement and trust to God for the rest, he has thus far been gracious beyond my deserts, but should he think proper to withdraw that protection and decide that I had done enough mischief in the world and cut me off in the midst of my sins, I have nothing to say, but that I am ready to submit to his will. My dear sister sent me a Holy Virgin like the one Rose gave. She said it was Blessed by the Archbishop, that he said I was good to all the Priests. I only tell you this to show you that they did not succeed in impressing the Bishop that I had Robbed the Church at Point Coupée.

"Give my love to your dear mother and sisters and Robert and Newton and Ashe.

"May God Bless and protect you all, ever prays your devoted husband,

"D. G. FARRAGUT.

"To

"Mrs. D. G. Farragut,

"Hastings on the Hudson,

"N.Y."

In later years, when Farragut was urged to allow his name to be placed before the Democratic Convention as a nominee for the Presidency—which honour, by the way, he declined—it was said of him that he was a man "whose public career had been at once loyal and heroic, and whose name is the signal for unbounded respect and acclaim."

In a letter to Mahan under date of May 23, 1897, Admiral Goodrich expressed this opinion: "I note that you went on the grand stand to see the Grant procession. I do not begrudge Grant his honors, but upon my soul I think it is a disgrace to the American people that Farragut's memory should be so little regarded. He was greater than Grant."

## CHAPTER VII

### ENGLAND

“ I can imagine that when the God of Nations calls the roll of those who have been faithful, England will say, ‘ I am here with my ships and my men. My losses are grievous, but my spirit is unbroken.’ ”—  
NEWTON D. BAKER, Secretary of War.

THE time had now come for Mahan to take his turn at sea, and he presented to the Navy Department an earnest request to be allowed further extension of time on shore, so that he might continue his Sea Power series, the next step in which he intended to be *The War of 1812*. His application was supported by influential friends, both naval and civil, and was fortified by his offer to retire in four years' time, in 1896, at the completion of forty years' service; but fate in the person of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation decided otherwise. This official, apparently oblivious of the national importance of holding out every possible encouragement to a man who was capable of giving to the nation such remarkable creations as the first two Sea Power books,<sup>1</sup> both of which had then been published, denied Mahan's request with the insensate remark, *It is not the business of a naval officer to write books.*

<sup>1</sup> “ At the Union League Club in New York they call him the Jomini of the Water. The *Times* speaks of the term Sea Power and again speaks of him as having done for the Ocean what Adam Smith had done for the Land, and compares *Sea Power* with the *Wealth of Nations*. What next will they say? And yet the man who wrote that book and who thought those thoughts into it is in danger of being taken from the War College and sent to sea!”—McCARTY LITTLE.

In the last analysis, what is efficiency? <sup>1</sup> Is it not the ability to discriminate between things which differ, however minutely—although to the unthinking they may appear alike—and with unerring skill to distinguish essential from non-essential, and act accordingly? And does not a similar principle apply to the faculty of recognising and accurately measuring the capacities of individuals, of whom no two are alike? The efficient chief, ever minutely observant and free from prejudice, gauges to a nicety by intelligent discrimination the special qualifications of each, and is thus enabled to utilise to the best possible advantage the services of those with whom he is associated.

On this occasion the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation failed to use his powers of discrimination, but in so doing he unwittingly did Mahan a great service.

There is a touch of pathos in Mahan's appeal for his literary life. Here is his letter to the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation :

“ U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE AND TORPEDO SCHOOL,  
“ NEWPORT, R.I.

“ *March 17, 1893.*

“ SIR,

“ I wish to make the following request to the Navy Department.

“ For seven years I have been engaged in a close study of Naval History and Naval Warfare. Of the results of this study much has not been published ; but the greater part has been and is now before the Department and the Navy. It is my desire to devote myself henceforth to the development of the same line of thought ; and in that view it is my purpose to retire in 1896, after forty years of service, as now allowed by law.

“ Meanwhile I become liable to sea service for a

<sup>1</sup> A woman is said to have nonplussed an assemblage of distinguished political scientists by remarking, “ I have heard all my life of German efficiency. If Germany loses the war, after forty years of preparation, what is efficiency ? ”

period of at least two years. I apprehend that at my age—53—such a diversion is not merely a loss of two years of fruitful effort, invaluable at any age and especially in the later prime of life, but that also the consequent entire interruption of my line of thought may prove to be final. The complicated administration of a large modern ship-of-war is a task too absorbing to admit of sustained mental effort in another direction.

“As far as I know, there is no other officer who proposes to do that which I here propose. I therefore ask that, upon the understanding that I will retire as above, within the term of the present Administration, the Department will rule that the contribution I may be expected to make to professional thought, by such studies as the above, outweighs the advantage that can result from the experience of two years of command, when these so shortly precede my final retirement from active service; and that the Department will for these reasons excuse me from such sea service.

“I have the honor to be,

“Very respectfully,

“Your obedient servant,

“A. T. MAHAN,

“Captain, U.S. Navy,

*President, U.S. Naval War College and Torpedo School.*

“To the

“Chief of Bureau of Navigation,

“Navy Department,

“Washington, D.C.”

Following up his application to the Navy Department, Mahan stated his case in a letter to Mr. Roosevelt, from whom he received this reply :

“WASHINGTON, D.C.,

“May 1, 1893.

“MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,—

“Last evening Lodge, Harry Davis, Admiral Luce and I held a solemn council of war with your last letter to me as the text. I fear all hope for the War College (which is nothing without you) has gone; our prize idiots here have thrown away a chance to

give us an absolutely unique position in Naval affairs, but I made a very strong bid to give you at least the *Miantonomah*. The obstacle is of course Ramsay, who is bitterly opposing it or anything else that may help you. Lodge will see Herbert about the *Miantonomah* business.

"Oh, what idiots we have to deal with! And those 'Century Geese!' Well meaning, good people the Century folk, but their writing that there were not three men in the Navy who could do your work was as if some one had said there were not ten men who could do Farragut's.

"Faithfully yours,

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

The following message came from his brother Major Frederick Mahan :

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE LIGHTHOUSE BOARD,

"WASHINGTON, D.C.,

"May 3, 1893.

"MY DEAR ALF,—

"There was a reporter in here yesterday who told me that he had learned at the Navy Department that your orders for sea would not go into effect for a year yet. I told him of your possible assignment to the *Miantonomah*, and he answered that he had heard of that but that the report which he gave me yesterday was of later date.

"I met Dewey this morning and he tells me that there has been a tremendous pressure brought to bear from naval officers themselves to keep you on shore, giving as an example of it a remark made by McNair that although he likes exceedingly his work at the Observatory, he considers that what you are doing is of so much more importance, that he would be willing to volunteer to go to sea to have you left on shore.

"I tell you these things for what they are worth. Of course I cannot say anything about them as to their accuracy, or their reliability, but still they may be looked on as indicating straws.

"Very affectionately,

"F. A. MAHAN."

Despite the efforts of his friends, Mahan had to go to sea and was appointed to the command of the *Chicago*, flagship of Admiral Erben on the European station. *L'homme propose mais Dieu dispose*, and in this case nothing could have been more fortunate for that deeply disappointed philosopher. When the *Chicago* reached England, the most eminent and distinguished personages in the land sought to do him honour and to express their recognition of his genius. No sooner had the flagship touched at Queenstown, her first port of call in Ireland, than the avalanche of hospitable invitations began to descend upon his unprotected head.

This created unexpected complications, for Admirals after all are but human, and some embarrassment was created at Queenstown by the arrival of a telegram addressed to Mahan from the American Embassy in London stating that Earl Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, wished to give him a dinner and asking him to name a convenient date. When Lord Spencer's dinner eventually took place on the arrival of the *Chicago* in England, it was given in honour of Admiral Erben and Captain Mahan. It included the Viceroy of Ireland, several Cabinet ministers, and a number of the most distinguished admirals and military commanders in the country. Prior to this, Admiral Erben and Captain Mahan had dined with the Viceroy of Ireland on the yacht *Enchantress* in Queenstown Harbour.

The First Lord of the Admiralty entertained Mahan on other occasions, and told him one night at dinner that Mr. John Morley, a member of the Cabinet and one of the most distinguished literary men in England (now Viscount Morley of Blackburn), wished to meet him. This, Mahan recorded in a private letter to his family, "he found it hard to believe."

On the arrival of the *Chicago* at the Isle of Wight for the Cowes Regatta, a large envelope with the seal

of the "Board of Green Cloth" aroused Mahan's curiosity. It contained information that the Lord Steward of the Royal Household had received the Queen's command to invite Captain Mahan to dinner on July 31, at 8.45 of the clock. Full naval dress was the order of the day. In a letter to his daughter, Mahan records that for the first time in his life he sat down to dinner with his sword on, and was much impressed by the magnificent uniforms and orders worn by many of the other guests. Among those at the dinner were the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII), the Duke of York (now King George V of England), Lord Roberts, Sir Henry Keppel, Admiral of the Fleet, and a number of foreign naval officers. After dinner Captain Mahan was presented to the Prince of Wales and other distinguished guests. Lord Roberts told him that some one had sent him *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, and after reading it he had bought the second book himself. In reply to his complimentary remarks, Mahan said that he thought it better to have *done* something, as Lord Roberts had, than to have only written something.

The following day the Duke of Connaught arrived on board the *Chicago* unannounced. This nearly led to a mild tragedy, because, not having given his name, he was informed that both the Admiral and the Captain were dressing for dinner. As it was about five in the afternoon, he naturally remarked that it seemed a long time to dinner and suggested that perhaps the Admiral would see the Duke of Connaught! My friend Dr. Brathwaite, who was surgeon on the *Chicago* during this European cruise and who has been invaluable in helping me to form a just estimate of Mahan's temperament, tells me that during Cowes week it was not unusual for the young English Princesses to visit the flagship in the same uncereemonious way.

Shortly after this the flagship left for the Channel

and Mediterranean ports of France and Spain. Admiral Erben, Captain Mahan, and the officers of the *Chicago* were entertained by the Prefect, the Mayor, and other notabilities of Havre; and nothing could exceed the kindness of the members of an English family by the name of Schiff towards the officers of the ship when they touched at Villefranche. On the return of the *Chicago* to England in the spring of 1894 a veritable deluge of honours and entertainments awaited Mahan.

His English publishers, Messrs. Sampson Low & Marston, were first in the field, and gave a dinner in his honour at that famous rendezvous of Americans, the Langham Hotel. Then, on May 24, a public banquet was given at St. James's Hall in honour of Admiral Erben, Captain Mahan, and the officers of the *Chicago*. The company numbered about four hundred, and among the Committee of Welcome were the Lord Mayor of London and a number of the most distinguished English admirals and generals, including Admiral of the Fleet Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby and Lord Roberts; while the list of stewards comprised many of the most eminent names in Britain. Among the guests of note were Mr. John Hay and Mr. William C. Whitney. Following the toasts of the Queen and the President of the United States, the toast of the United States was responded to by the United States Ambassador, Mr. Bayard. The United States Navy was honoured by Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby and Admiral Erben. In felicitous vein Lord Roberts proposed the health of Mahan and the officers of the *Chicago*, and expressed a wish that Captain Mahan should do for military history what he had done for the naval service.

In replying, Mahan said in part:

"It is indeed to us a special occasion, the memory of which will remain throughout our lives. But it is satisfactory to know and to feel that this pre-eminently distinguished assemblage is by no means alone or

peculiar in its manifestations of the kindly feeling and cordial sentiments which more and more, as time goes by, are coming to mark the relations between the citizens of Great Britain and the citizens of the United States.

“Certainly it is so between the naval officers of the two nations, as I myself am able to affirm from an experience of more than a quarter of a century, and I am happy to number personally among my friends many members of the British Navy, who have not only rendered me great and substantial service at various times, but have shown very great kindness in so doing.

“And indeed naval officers of the United States should feel a peculiar sympathy with Englishmen, over and above that which is felt by the mass of our fellow citizens, because by our education and our habits of thought we are brought into close sympathy and contact with one of the greatest of British interests, and we, as naval officers, are in keen sympathy with the greatest of all, that is, the British Navy.

“The Navy is the first line of defence in Great Britain, and although I fear I shall have to decline Lord Roberts’s very flattering offer to undertake the subject of military warfare, I can quite understand that although you have a first line of defence, you ought also to have a second. Separated as we are by the broad expanse of the Atlantic, we are able to look upon many European questions with a certain amount of calmness and indifference. But when the question of the Navy is reached, feelings of indifference give way to feelings of admiration and enthusiasm for what is a record of glory unsurpassed in the annals of time.”

On June 2, the Royal Navy Club of 1765 and 1785 invited Admiral Erben and Captain Mahan as guests to a dinner to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Lord Howe’s victory on June 1, 1794. Unfortunately Admiral Erben was unable to attend; so Mahan was the sole guest. He occupied the seat of honour at the right hand of the President, Admiral Sir Vesey Hamilton, and it was the first time anyone other than a British

subject had enjoyed the privilege of dining with this ancient institution, whose fame is enhanced by the fact that among other celebrated names in its list of members is that of Nelson. On his right was Admiral Sir William Houston Stewart, who told him he had never thoroughly understood Howe's great victory of June 1 until he, Mahan, had explained it. He considered the description magnificent.<sup>1</sup> Sir William Houston Stewart made an eloquent and enthusiastic speech on Anglo-American relations and Mahan's writings, and his call for three cheers for his guest was vigorously taken up by the admirals and captains present, of whom there were about a hundred.

Writing to Mrs. Mahan a description of it, he said : " You may imagine I was somewhat overwhelmed at being thus greeted by a hundred British admirals and captains. I think it was perhaps the most spontaneous and affecting testimonial I received while in England." In after-years he sought the opinion of Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark in these words :

" Would you kindly glance your eye over the enclosed, and let me know if it accords with truth ? You can understand that in my recollections, and particularly of my stay in England in 1894, I am divided between

<sup>1</sup> " I extended my reading by Jomini's *Wars of the French Republic*, a work instructive from the political as well as military point of view ; concurrently testing Howe's naval campaign of 1794 by the principles advanced by the military author, which commended themselves to my judgment. In connection with this study of naval strategy I reconstructed independently Howe's three engagements of May 28 and 29 and June 1, from the details given by James, Troude, and Chevalier, analysing and discussing the successive tactical measures of the opposing admirals ; in the battle of June 1 going so far as to trace even the tracks of the fifty-odd individual ships throughout the action. This, the most complicated presentation I ever attempted, was a needless elaboration, though of absorbing interest to me when once begun. A comparison between it and the bare conventional diagram of Trafalgar in the same volumes, which has been criticised as not reproducing the facts, may serve to show how far multiplicity of minutiae conduces to clearness of perception."—*From Sail to Steam*.

the wish not to seem to make too much of the attentions showed me, and the equal desire to recognise all that they were in themselves. Of these, among the most valued by me was the Royal Navy Club, because of the closeness with which it has guarded guestship. The compliment of being the first foreigner to be entertained by it was very great."

At dinner, one night later in the season, Captain Prince Louis of Battenberg (now Admiral the Marquess of Milford Haven) told him that he was the first man not a British subject that had ever dined with the Club, and added: "I hope we shall hereafter stick to the rule, so that you may remain the only one."

One of the admirals at the dinner said to Mahan: "There is only one fault I find in you American officers, and that is there are not nearly enough of you."

A week before the Royal Navy Club dinner he received the following letter, which very naturally gave him profound satisfaction:

"9, NORHAM GARDENS, OXFORD,  
"May 22, 1894.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"At my suggestion the University of Oxford considered in Council yesterday the question of whether you should be asked to do us the honour of receiving the Honorary Degree of D.C.L. at our 'Commemoration' on June 20. I am happy to say that the suggestion was most favourably entertained, and I was commissioned to inquire whether you are likely to be on our shores at that time. I cannot help the expression of my hope that you may find it possible to be present.

"I do not think that any one of the recipients of our Degree would be considered more worthy of such honour as our ancient University can bestow, or would be more popular with our people. One of our Heads of Houses, the President of Trinity, will do himself the honour of entertaining you in my place, as Mrs. Burrows is not strong enough to undertake it, but I shall claim you as

my guest at the All Souls lunch, which is a sort of University function.

“Yours faithfully,

“MONTAGU BURROWS,

“*Capt. R.N.*

“(*Professor of History*).

“Until we know of your acceptance, this invitation, if you please, is to be kept *entirely confidential* as regards the public.”

Captain Burrows was probably the first naval officer in the annals of Oxford to occupy a professor's chair in the University.

Upon his acceptance of the honour, Mahan received this letter from Dr. Woods, the President of Trinity College :

“TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD,

“May 24, 1894.

“MY DEAR SIR,—

“Professor Burrows tells me that you are willing to accept the Honorary Degree of D.C.L., which the University of Oxford proposes to confer on you, and upon me falls (as having been the proposer of the Degree at the meeting of the Council of the University) the pleasant duty of asking you to be my guest while you are at Oxford for the purpose. It will give Mrs. Woods and myself much pleasure, if you will come to us on Tuesday the 19th of June, at any time which is convenient to you. The Degree will be conferred in the Theatre on the morning of the 20th, and Professor Burrows has asked us to bring you on that day to luncheon at All Souls College, where the guests of the University are generally entertained after the ceremony. I may add that both Mrs. Woods and I are warm admirers of your books, and that it will give us real satisfaction to have this pleasant opportunity of making your acquaintance.

“Believe me, dear Sir,

“Very faithfully yours,

“H. G. WOODS.”

“To Captain Mahan.”

The conferring of the degree took place in the ancient building known as the Sheldonian Theatre, which was given to the University in 1669 by Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University. It is a fine example of Sir Christopher Wren's genius, and enjoyed the distinction of being the early home of the University Printing Press. Writing to his son at this time, Mahan said :

“What a charming, fascinating place Oxford is ! I wish it were possible to describe to you the ancient gray buildings, the beautiful green turf and trees, and the historical associations with which Dr. Woods made my visit so interesting, but it would be impossible. English people are right to love their country, for a lovelier one would be hard to find.”

No doubt Mahan was familiar with Matthew Arnold's :

“Steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age. Who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection, to beauty, which, in a word, is only truth seen from another side ?”

Among others upon whom were conferred degrees were the Earl of Kimberley, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Mandell Creighton. In *From Sail to Steam* Mahan gives this amusing description of the ceremony :

“The great occasion at Oxford presents a curious combination of impressiveness and horse-play, such as is associated with the Abbot of Misrule in the stories of the Middle Ages. It is this smack and suggestion of antiquity, of unnumbered such occasions in the misty past, when the student was half-scholar and half-ruffian, which makes the permitted license of to-day not only tolerable, but in a sense even venerable. The good-humor and general acceptance on both sides,

by chaffers and chaffed, testified to recognised conditions; and there is about a hoary institution a saving grace which cannot be transferred to *parvenus*. Practised in a modern Cis-Atlantic seat of learning, as I have seen it done, without the historical background, the same disregard of normal decorum becomes undraped rowdyism—boxing without gloves. The scene and its concurrences at Oxford have been witnessed by too many, and too often described, for me to attempt them. I shall narrate only my particular experiences. I had been desired to appear in full uniform—epaulettes, cocked hat, sword, and what is suggestively called ‘brass-bound’ coat; swallow-tailed, with a high collar stiffened with lining and gold lace, set off by trousers with a like broad stripe of lace, not inaptly characterised by some humorist as ‘railroad’ trousers. The theory of these last, I believe, is that so much decoration on hat and collar, if not balanced by an equivalent amount below, is top-heavy in visual effect, if not on personal stability. Whatever the reason, it is all there, and I had it all at Oxford; all on my head and back, I mean, except the epaulettes. For to my concern I found that over all this paraphernalia I must also wear the red silk gown of a D.C.L. It became evident, immediately upon trial, that the silk and the epaulettes were agreeing like the Kilkenny cats, so it was conceded that these naval ornaments should be dispensed with; the more readily as they could not have been seen. In the blend, and for the occasion, my legal laurels prevailed over my professional exterior.

“In the matter of dress my life certainly culminated when I walked up—or down—High Street in Oxford with cocked hat, red silk gown, and sword, the railroad trousers modestly peeping beneath. It must be admitted that the townsmen either had more than French politeness, or else were used to incongruities. I did not see one crack a smile; whether any turned to look or not, I did not turn to see. My hospitable escort and myself joined the other expectants before the Sheldonian Theatre, where the ceremonies are held. The audience, of both sexes, visitors and students, had

already crammed the benches and galleries of the great circular interior when we marched to our seats, in single file, down a narrow aisle. The fun, doubtless, had been going on already some time; but for us it was non-existent till we entered, when the hose was turned full upon us and our several peculiarities. I am bound to say that to encourage us we got quite as many cheers as chaff, and the personalities which flew about like grape-shot were pretty much hit or miss. I noticed that some one from aloft called out, 'Why don't you have your hair cut?' which I afterwards understood was a delicate allusion to my somewhat unparalleled baldness; but it happened that two behind me in the procession was a very distinguished Russian scientist, like myself a D.C.L., *in ovo*, whose long locks fell over his collar, and I innocently supposed that so pertinent a remark was addressed to him on an occasion when *impertinence* was lord of the ascendant. Thus the shaft passed me harmless, or fell back blunted from my triple armor of dulness."

The Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University was the next to be heard from. Here is his letter:

"THE LODGE, KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

"June 11, 1894.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I am desired by the Council of this University to ask you if it would be possible for you to come to Cambridge and receive the Honorary Degree of LL.D., and if such a compliment would be acceptable to you.

"The days of Congregation on which the Degree would be conferred are Monday June 18, Tuesday June 19, and Wednesday June 27.

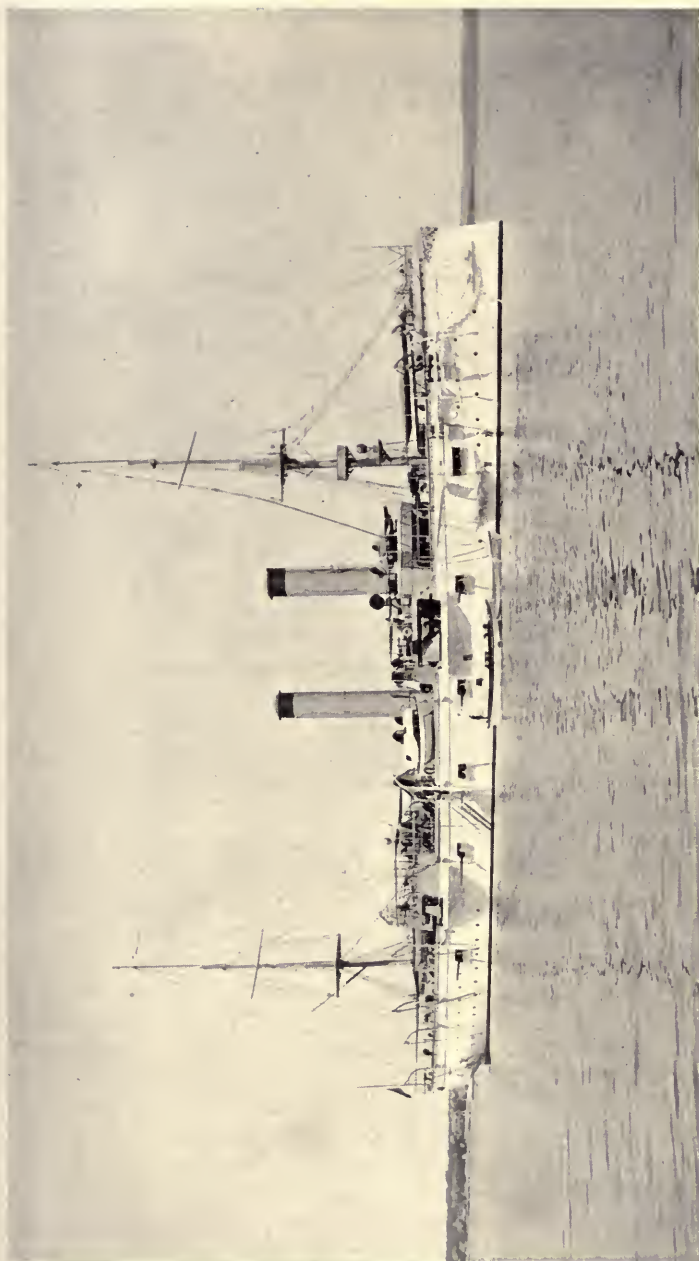
"I shall be very glad if it would suit you to come to Cambridge on one of those days.

"Yours very faithfully

"A. AUSTEN LEIGH,

"Vice-Chancellor."

This was one of the unfortunate occasions on which the flagship was inconveniently absent from British



UNITED STATES CRUISER CHICAGO



waters. She was at Antwerp when the time came for conferring the degrees, and as Mahan could be spared for but one week, he had to forgo the pleasure and distinction of being present at both Universities upon the days appointed. As Oxford was first in the field, he decided to go there on their Commemoration Day and receive his Cambridge degree on a day convenient to the authorities in the same week.<sup>1</sup> This he did, and Dr. Sandys, the Public Orator, commemorated the event in Latin, of which this is a translation :

*"We greet to-day with fraternal love a guest who has come across the Atlantic to England. We greet not only a citizen of a very great republic, but also the most eminent authority on naval science and naval history, one who has pointed out in his works the transcendent importance of sea power in the history of great nations. When we read his remarkable books we behold the image of our maritime empire rise from the waves made luminous by his pen. We behold the cause of, and the beginnings of our widely scattered commerce ; and the need for protecting our far-off colonies. And finally we are strengthened in the determination that for the welfare of the world and for the cause of universal peace we shall never permit that glory to be snatched from us. Moreover, we prophesy that in the future our brothers across the sea will be sharers of that glory ; meanwhile, thoroughly appreciating that we are of the same blood, the same language, and the same glorious history, we gladly stretch forth across the sea which happily separates us no longer our right hands in a bond of friendship which we hope is destined to be for all time.*

<sup>1</sup> "Oxford had been first to tender me her distinction, and I accordingly arranged my journey with a view to her celebration ; two days before which I went down to Cambridge, and was there received and enrolled at a private audience, before the accustomed officials and some few visitors from outside. What the circumstances lacked in the pomp of numbers and observance, and in the consequent stimulus to interest which a very novel experience arouses, was compensated to me by the few hours of easy social intercourse with a few eminent persons, whom I had the pleasure of then meeting very informally."

—*From Sail to Steam.*

*"Whom love unites, in vain the ocean sunders; with one accord we clasp our hands across the friendly main."*

*"I present to you a man who is very closely united to the British by the ties of friendship, and one who is numbered among the highest in American naval affairs, Alfred Thayer Mahan."*

Later in the day, as LL.D. of Cambridge University, Mahan revelled among the portraits in the house of Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity College, from the walls of which looked down upon him the faces of numbers of famous men of whom he had so often read. Lord Rosebery, the Prime Minister, said to him at one of these functions: "I think you have broken the record in taking a degree from both Universities in the same week."

Four hundred years ago, in the reign of Bluff King Hal, a charter was granted to an association of English mariners, under the title of the Corporation of Trinity House, the management of which was in 1609 conferred upon the Elder Brethren thereof. In 1894 the Master and Elder Brethren invited Mahan to dinner to meet the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII). The guests of honour included a number of the most prominent men in England, the Duke of York (now King George V, then Master of Trinity House) being in the chair; and among the Elder Brethren entertaining were the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke of Teck, Lord Rosebery (then Prime Minister), and the Marquess of Salisbury.

A more distinguished body of men it would have been hardly possible to assemble together, including, as it did, nine members of the Royal family and seven Cabinet ministers.

Of all those who did honour to Mahan, no one was more courteous than the Prime Minister, who entertained him several times. This letter from him, among a

number, shows a personal interest which Mahan much appreciated :

*First Lord of the Treasury.*

“ 10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,

“ May 29, 1894.

“ MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,—

“ I write in the forlorn hope of being able to persuade you to dine with me quietly on Thursday or Friday next, when we might have conversation less interrupted than was possible the other night, but I know it is a forlorn hope !

“ Sincerely,

“ ROSEBERY.”

Following these functions, he was again invited to dine with Her Majesty the Queen, and to a ball at Buckingham Palace. In a private letter to his family, after describing the guests, the scarlet liveries of the footmen and the uniforms of the Highlanders and Indian attendants, he said that the Queen spoke kindly of his books. He adds with characteristic modesty : “ I think that Royal people are always coached for such occasions.”

Invitations too numerous to mention poured in upon him. Among these he much enjoyed a visit to Lord and Lady Salisbury at Hatfield House, one of the most interesting country places in England, brimming over with associations of old days and of the doings of the great house of Cecil from the days of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Burghley. To mention but one possession of transcendent interest, Hatfield contains the originals of thousands of the most important State papers of Elizabeth's days.

Mahan was entertained by the American Ambassador, by Lord Rothschild, Lord Nelson, Sir Francis Jeune, Lord Radstock, Lord Stanley of Alderley, and many other prominent and distinguished personages. The

Prince of Wales expressed a wish that he should attend one of his levees at St. James's Palace, an introduction which culminated in a private audience a few years later when the Prince had become King Edward VII. The privileges of a number of the most prominent clubs were extended to him, and the Athenæum Club, which in those days opened its doors to "a distinctly limited number of distinguished visitors," invited Mahan to become an honorary member and entertained him at dinner.

He recounts that everywhere he experienced the same cordiality, and among his correspondence are a number of letters testifying to the warmth of his reception at the hands of the great men of the day in England. Poor Mahan! He did not realise it at the time, but he was virtually one of the lions of the London season than which there is possibly no more exhausting and experience. All of this was very flattering, even if ephemeral, but among his many experiences there is one which he especially prized and treasured. It was the receipt of a letter from the American Ambassador.

The opinion of such a man, highly distinguished in diplomatic life, and universally esteemed for his personal character and attainments, may be considered a fair criterion of the estimate it is justifiable to place upon the value of the services rendered to the State by a fellow citizen. Mr. Bayard, United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James, wrote him this charming letter :

" EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES, LONDON,  
" June 22, 1894.

" DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,—

" As the envoy here of our Government, and with genuine personal satisfaction, I wish to congratulate you upon the well-deserved degrees—*honoris causa*—conferred upon you by 'those twins of learning'—Oxford and Cambridge.

" I hold it to be the highest good fortune that in the

prosecution of your professional duties you have been enabled to render such eminent service to the truth of history, the world of letters, and the good relations of two nations of kindred speech and morals.

“In these days, when irritating aspersions and ungenerous recriminations are only too frequent, the magnanimity and perfect temper with which as an American citizen and sailor you have accorded praise and admiration to the memories of heroic men and deeds of the British Navy are most welcome and refreshing.

“It is honorable to you and to your country and is potential in arousing a responsive feeling in the hearts of the people to whom you have dealt their just meed.

“Wishing you increased fame and the full enjoyment of all that should accompany it,

“Believe me to be

“Very sincerely yours,

“T. F. BAYARD.

“Captain Alfred T. Mahan,

“U.S.S. *Chicago*.”

In the following January the death of Sir John Seeley, the historian, left vacant the chair of Modern History at Cambridge University, and, much to the delight of Captain McCarty Little and other intimate friends, the suggestion was seriously made in the London Press that Mahan should be invited to become his successor as Professor of Modern History.

Here is McCarty Little's letter on the subject :

“UNIVERSITY CLUB.

“COMPLIMENT TO CAPTAIN MAHAN.

“HINT THAT HE BE CALLED TO PROFESSORSHIP OF  
“MODERN HISTORY

“*London, Jan. 28.*—The *Daily Graphic* will print to-morrow a leader on the suggestion made by a correspondent of *St. James's Gazette* that Captain Mahan, United States Navy, be called to Cambridge to take the

Professorship of Modern History, which was left vacant by the death of Sir John Seeley two weeks ago. The writer says :

“ ‘ Captain Mahan’s contribution to history is not easily measured by academic standards, for it rises into the higher plane of statesmanship. The weakest point of the suggestion is that Captain Mahan possibly will prefer active life in the United States Navy, but there is no reason why the offer should not be made. A refusal would be our loss, but we should have had the pleasure of expressing appropriately our gratitude for the national service he has done us.’ ”

“ Rira bien qui rira le dernier,” and after all said and done, I rather think, my dear Mrs. Mahan, that we have already enough to justify our starting the commencement of a good big enduring smile!!!

“ I could not imagine a case of such a glorious victory. It is seldom that merit receives such an overwhelming acknowledgment, and especially when it is in the case of one who keeps himself so thoroughly in the background as Captain Mahan ; and all the more bitter must be the pill for those who have sought to pooh-pooh his work.

“ Hoping to see you very soon,

“ Believe me, very sincerely,

“ W. McCARTY LITTLE.”

In a letter to his family about this time, Mahan said :

“ The books are booming. The English publisher writes me he had an order in Boston for 500 of the first and 250 of the second, which Little & Brown could not fill till new copies were printed. They had sold in six weeks more than in six months previous. This did England for us.”

In *The Navy as a Fighting Machine* Admiral Bradley Fiske endorses Mahan in some notable tributes to naval power. Among other things he says :

“ No other nation has ever dominated so large a part of the surface of the globe as has Great Britain during

the last two centuries; and she has done it by means of her naval power. It is certain that that 'tight little island' has attained a world-wide power, and a wealth per capita greater than those of any other country; that her power and wealth, as compared with her home area, are so much greater than those of any other country as to stagger the understanding; that she could not have done what she has done without her Navy. The British Navy, even more than the British Army, brought Great Britain safe out of the Napoleonic danger, and made the British the paramount nation of the world."

On the return voyage to the United States the Governor of Gibraltar and the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Squadron gave receptions "to meet Captain Mahan," and he ends his last home letter from that side of the ocean with these words: "So you see that our hospitable English friends were good to me to the end."

### ENGLAND

*Mother of a dauntless race, just, considerate, gentle, kind,  
True and honest as the day, none more sturdy in the fight;*

*Garden of surpassing grace, where peace and rest and calm delights,  
Midst lovesome, matchless beauty dwell, fair guerdon of a thousand years;*

*Where lavender and rosemary, phlox, bluebell, crocus, jasmine, thyme,  
Rose, violet, poppy, briarsweet, lark, linnet, thrush and nightingale,*

*From dawn past twilight's lingering kiss, in colour, fragrance, melody,  
Pour out their loveliness to Him, of all the giver and the source;*

*Land of kindly gentle folk,  
Yet mistress of the all-puissant seas,*

ENGLAND.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LIFE OF NELSON

"We have all simply devoured your *Nelson*, and there is but one verdict: that the Life of Nelson will never again be written."—ADMIRAL CASPAR F. GOODRICH, United States Navy.

AFTER the completion of *The Life of Farragut* and *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, Mahan turned his thoughts towards the task of writing *The War of 1812*, but as he was ordered to sea in command of the *Chicago* just at this time, the work was unfortunately postponed and the book was not written until several years later.

This postponement, coupled with the fact that *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire* of necessity dealt with Nelson's campaigns, the details of which were then fresh in his memory, led to his carrying out his intended project of writing a biography of the greatest seaman of all time.

Before he sailed from America on the *Chicago* he had received this note from Mr. Roosevelt:

"OYSTER BAY, LONG ISLAND, N.Y.,  
"June 13, '93.

"DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,—

"I greatly enjoyed the clipping from the Tribune. What a real donkey the Evening Post is! and what fearful mental degeneracy results from reading it, or the Nation as a steady thing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When the question of the inclusion of this letter in the volume was discussed, Mr. Roosevelt said to the author in his boyishly impetuous way, "Put it in; put it in: the *Evening Post* is just as big a donkey as ever." Since these words were spoken, however, the *Evening Post* and the *Nation* are said to have passed into other and, it is claimed, in the interests of sound Americanism, more acceptable hands.

"Well, I hate to have you abandon our own war history, even temporarily, but you are the one man to write a history of Nelson and such a history we ought to have.

"Good luck go with you!

"Very faithfully yours,

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

One of the immediate results of the departmental order requiring him to go to sea was the priceless opportunity of coming into immediate contact in England with a number of persons closely related to Nelson and his family, and to the great commanders who fought with him. From these he was enabled to acquire an immense amount of first-hand information that would otherwise have been inaccessible.<sup>1</sup> Skilful employment of this valuable material added much to the interest and accuracy of the biography, which is considered by many of the highest authorities as pre-eminently the best biography of Nelson so far published.

He found it impossible to do any serious literary work while on sea duty,<sup>2</sup> so the actual writing of *The Life of Nelson* was done from 1895 to 1897, within the two years following the termination of the cruise of the *Chicago*, and the book was given to the world in 1897.

Mahan's formula was to realise his personality by mentally "living with Nelson" in as close familiarity

<sup>1</sup> Among others, the Earl of Ducie assisted by lending him his copy of Drinkwater's account of the battle of St. Vincent.

<sup>2</sup> "Although in itself in most ways enjoyable, the cruise of the *Chicago*, while it lasted, necessarily suspended authorship. I heard intimations of the common opinion that the leisure of a naval officer's life would afford abundant opportunity. Even I myself for a moment imagined that time in some measure might be found for accumulating material, for which purpose I took along several books; but it was in vain. Neither a ship nor a book is patient of a rival, and I soon ceased the effort to serve both. Night work was tried, contrary to my habit; but after a few weeks I had to recognise that the evening's exertion had dulled my head for the next morning's duties."—A. T. M.

as was consistent with the fact of his being dead. This resulted in a profound admiration for the man, little short indeed of deep affection, and he admits that he grieved while he condemned the shortcomings of that remarkable character whom he sums up in these words : " Sharer of our mortal weakness, he has bequeathed to us a type of single-minded self-devotion that can never perish. Wherever danger has to be faced or duty to be done, at cost to self, men will draw inspiration from the name and deeds of Nelson."

On the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1905, Mahan was invited to address the Victoria Club of Boston, and he defined the subject of his discourse as *The Strength of Nelson*.

In the course of this he dissected Nelson's character in a manner so profoundly interesting as more than to repay examination. It concluded with this eloquent summary :

" In a celebrated funeral oration, which we all know, the speaker says : ' I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.' It is for no such purpose that men observe this day ; for the man, the memory of whom now moves his people, is not one to be buried, but to be praised and kept in everlasting remembrance. True, he needs not our praises, but we need to praise him for our own sakes. The Majesty on High is exalted far above all praise, yet it is good to praise Him ; for the essence of praise is not the homage of the lips, but the recognition of excellence ; and recognition, when real, elevates, ennobles. It fosters an ideal which tends to induce imitation, and to uplift by sheer force of appreciation and association. And as with the Creator, so with the excellent among his creatures. We need not ignore their failings, or their sins, although an occasion like the present is not one for dwelling upon these ; but as we recognise in them men of like frailties with ourselves, we yet perceive that, despite all, they have not only done the great works, but have been the great men whom we justly reverence. That they in their weakness

have had so much in common with us gives hope that we may yet have something in common with them in their strength. It is the high grace and privilege of a man like Nelson that he provokes emulation rather than rivalry, imitation rather than competition. To extol him uplifts ourselves. As it was when he lived on earth, so it is now. His life is an inheritance to children's children; of his own people first, but after them, of all the nations of the earth."

The literary critic of the London *Times* prophesied that *The Life of Nelson* would become one of the greatest of naval classics.

Of the countless reviews which appeared at the time, but one extract will here be quoted, being temperate in language but characteristic of most of them (*see Bibliography*) :

"Captain Mahan had already, by his previous works—*The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, and *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*—placed himself in the front rank of naval historians, winning distinction by his perfect mastery of strategy, his philosophic insight and perspicacity, his power of exposition and analysis, and his well-reasoned and clearly balanced judgments.

"It was to be expected that *The Life of Nelson* would be characterised by the same qualities—that for exhaustive professional knowledge, for adequate treatment of Nelson's career, his relation to the Admiralty and to questions of State policy, for appreciation of his military genius, and for dispassionate judicial temper in handling the character of his hero, Captain Mahan's book would satisfy the demands of criticism.

"But, even from a writer of Captain Mahan's acknowledged ability, few persons were prepared for a life like that which is here presented to us. Here 'the mightiest seaman that ever trod the deck of a ship' is faithfully and reverently drawn in all his consummate strength, in all his deplorable weakness, and he stands out alive from the page. There is

unstinted admiration of his martial genius; of his alertness of mind, swift as the lightning in its movement, overleaping the ordinary processes of reasoning, seldom mistaken in its intuitive conclusions; of his long patience to wait and wear out his foes, and his dash, like the tiger's spring, when the opportunity arrived; of his high courage; of his unfailing magnanimity and generosity towards his officers and men; above all, his sacred regard for duty, and, as he conceived it, for honour—the lode-stars of his career. Many memoirs of our great admiral have been written, but Captain Mahan's *Life of Nelson* has no important rival. For the future, this is the book to which all students of the hero of the Nile, of Copenhagen, and Trafalgar will turn, as his one authoritative, accurate, and adequate biography and psychology.”—J. R. THURSFIELD, *Quarterly Review*.

Among the more interesting and curious of Mahan's documents is a characteristic letter of Nelson's, and a communication written on paper of which the watermark is Nelson's famous Trafalgar signal represented by the actual flags used and having on either side the dates 1805 and 1905. It is from a German naval officer, and is addressed from Kiel!

When Nelson died, his services were partly recognised by the conferring of an Earldom and a pension of five thousand pounds a year on his next-of-kin, his brother William, to whom was also made a grant of one hundred thousand pounds for the purchase of a suitable estate to commemorate Nelson's memory. This is the estate now known as “Trafalgar.” The late Lord Nelson expressed his approval of the book in this letter to Mahan:

“TRAFALGAR,

“April 26, 1897.

“MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,—

“I acknowledged at once to the publisher your kind present of the two handsome volumes of your *Life of Nelson*. But I refrained from writing to you

until I had read the book. I congratulate you on the deserved and universal praise with which it has been received. This is indeed a triumph when we remember that it is the fourth of the new lives which have been given to the public during the last three years.

"Of course it was impossible for a Biographer to ignore the sad facts, so patent in the Alfred Morrison correspondence. But yet, while exposing to the full the heinousness of his fault and all its deteriorating consequences, you have so justly portrayed his otherwise noble character that this sad cloud is unable to obscure the grandeur and power which outshone human weakness.

"The true character of the man with all its littleness and all its greatness is fully maintained through the whole Biography, which shows that it was only want of opportunity which delayed an earlier display of his great power and determination against the enemy. We feel that if he had been in Hotham's place as glorious a battle would have forestalled the Nile, if in Parker's a more complete breaking up of the Northern Confederation would have forestalled Copenhagen, if in Calder's place as glorious a victory might have forestalled Trafalgar.

"We shall never forget your kindness in visiting us here, and as the living representative of that great name I thank you for setting so nobly before the world all the power and achievements of England's Admiral.

"Yours very truly,

"NELSON."

One other letter from the many received will be given. It is from Mahan's London publisher :

"ST. DUNSTAN'S HOUSE, FETTER LANE,

"LONDON, E.C.,

"March 8, 1897.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,—

"Messrs. Little, Brown & Co. sent me one copy in slips of your 'Nelson.' I began reading it at 5 p.m. on Saturday and read it till past 12. Began again yesterday 10 a.m. and finished it about 10 p.m. I could

not do anything but read it, and it took me nearly 20 hours.

“As the only Englishman who (so far as I know) has read it; I can with the utmost confidence assure you that it is certain to have a splendid reception here.

“I confess when I saw the size of it I felt a little fear on the point of interest being sustained, but the first chapter banished that fear. It begins admirably and the interest goes on increasing from page to page. It is a glorious book, is much greater than all others on the subject as Nelson was greater than all his competitors for fame.

“You have brought Nelson to life again. As an Englishman and the first to read your book, I can perfectly safely thank you for it in the name of our whole nation, but all I will do is to announce to you that the nation’s thanks are coming, just as soon as Messrs. Little, Brown & Co. will send the copies.

“With my warmest and most sincere congratulations, I am,

“Yours very sincerely,

“R. B. MARSTON.”

In his autobiography, *After Work*, Mr. Edward Marston, of Sampson Low, Marston & Company, records that *The Life of Nelson* was published by his firm in April 1897, and was accorded a magnificent reception, over 6,000 copies of the 36s. edition being quickly disposed of; and that although the sale of naval war books usually languishes in time of peace, there was a continuous, steady demand for those of Captain Mahan. The excitement in the literary and naval world must have been intense, judging from a statement in the *New York Times* to the effect that when *The Life of Nelson* appeared, Harold Frederic cabled to that paper from London that the reviewers of the London dailies sat up all night with the advance copies, in order to rush long reviews into print the next morning.

Of all the stories told of Nelson, is not one of the most touching that which recounts how on the day

before the battle of Trafalgar, while they were trying to close with the enemy's fleet, Nelson said to some of the officers at his table at dinner : " To-morrow I shall do that which will give you young gentlemen something to think about and talk about for the rest of your lives, but I shall not live to talk of it myself." It would seem that England's Admiral had a real presentiment of his coming end.

Never was there perhaps a finer illustration of the lesson which life is constantly teaching us that we are all human and that transcendent strength and petty weaknesses are found together in the same nature. The light of publicity which inevitably shines upon the one eventually discloses the other. Despite deplorable shortcomings, the calibre of Nelson's courage and sense of duty was such as to have inevitably brought him distinction, apart altogether from the spark of genius which displayed itself in his remarkable military insight and stamped him as a born commander and a potential winner of battles. Whatever may have been the actual date and incidents of their original adoption, the three rows of braid on seamen's collars and their black kerchiefs for ever commemorate Nelson's great victories of the Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar, and his glorious death.

Mahan closes his memorable review of that wondrous figure with these words :

" Happy he who lives to finish all his task. The words ' I have done my duty ' sealed the closed book of Nelson's story with a truth broader and deeper than he himself could suspect. His duty was done and its fruit perfected. Other men have died in the hour of victory, but for no other has victory so singular and so signal graced the fulfilment and ending of a great life's work. *Finis coronat opus* has of no man been more true than of Nelson. There were, indeed, consequences momentous and stupendous yet to flow from the decisive supremacy of Great Britain's sea power,

the establishment of which, beyond all question or competition, was Nelson's great achievement; but his part was done when Trafalgar was fought. The coincidence of his death with the moment of complete success has impressed upon that superb battle a stamp of finality, an immortality of fame, which even its own grandeur scarcely could have insured. He needed, and he left, no successor. To use again St. Vincent's words, 'There is but one Nelson.' "

Writing to Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark, Mahan said :

"I intend to retire when my time for voluntary retirement comes. This summer I have to give a few luncheons at our cottage in Newport, but I hope now within a month to begin serious and consecutive work on my 'Life of Nelson.' During the cruise I got him down as far as the siege of Bastia in 1794, but then had to stop. I find the great want now is not Nelson's own letters—there are quite enough of them—but letters from persons serving with him, or associated with him in daily life, who may incidentally mention him. If Captain Hammond is still with you—I understand he is an East of England man—won't you ask him if he knows of any descendants of Sir Edward Berry, who was Flag Captain at the Nile? Like Nelson he was a Norfolk man, and I am pretty sure married in the county. His home letters might have allusions, incidents of daily life, etc., which is the great desideratum now. I have received a few—but very few—new anecdotes of such character. If at any time you get track of anything of the sort, or can suggest where I might turn up something, be sure and let me know. I want very much to write a life that will be the standard, if I can."

From his friend the Hon. Henry White, of the United States Embassy, came this appreciative note :

"9, GROSVENOR CRESCENT, S.W.,

"April 27, 1897.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,—

"I cannot say how much gratified I was by the

receipt of your very kind letter announcing the approaching arrival of your 'Life of Nelson,' which has since duly reached me.

"I am very proud to be the possessor of a copy, given me by the author, of that remarkable work, and I shall always value it very highly. I have already read the greater part of the first volume with the deepest interest, and can only say that, besides being, if possible, more interesting than its predecessors, it contains to a marked degree all the features which make your works so remarkable. No one ever made technical and strategical details so lucid to the unprofessional intellect as you do.

"You have doubtless seen the innumerable criticisms—each more favourable than the other—which have appeared in this country about the work.

"It will always be to me one of the most pleasant incidents of my first period of official service in this country to have been here at the time of your first visit after your books had been published and to have realised the appreciation in which you were—and are—held; and I don't believe you have a fellow countryman who is prouder of you than I am.

"My wife is absent in Dresden or would doubtless ask to be remembered. I trust we may soon meet again, and meanwhile I am,

"Yours most sincerely and gratefully,

"HENRY WHITE."

In a letter to his daughter, Mahan wrote: "I intend to make the Life of Nelson the great work of my own life."

Whatever may be its exact place in the immortal trilogy of sea-power books, it is a fascinating work. Without it no man's library is complete. Those who fail to read it, rob themselves of a rare intellectual treat.

## CHAPTER IX

### NAVAL WAR BOARD

"They rule the balanced world who rule the main."—JAMES THOMSON.

ONE of Mahan's most important appointments came in 1898 on the breaking out of the Spanish-American War, when he was recalled by cable<sup>1</sup> from Italy and joined two other distinguished officers, Admiral Montgomery Sicard and Admiral (then Captain) Crowninshield, on the Naval War Board, which was speedily established for the purpose of furnishing the Secretary of the Navy with technical information and advice on questions of strategy. Three of the original members of this Board, Captain A. S. Barker and Commander Richardson Clover—both of whom became Rear-Admirals—and Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, were all called to active service within a few days of its formation; the last-named to take a command in the "Roosevelt Rough-Riders," which he himself recruited. Mahan sent the Department the following cable through the United States Embassy and immediately started for Washington:

"Captain Mahan offers following suggestions:

"FIRST. If two or three enemy's battleships enter Porto Rico, or elsewhere, they should at once be blocked

<sup>1</sup> Copy of cable:

"CAPTAIN MAHAN, HOTEL D'ITALIE, ROME.

"Long Washington twenty-fifth cables proceed to United States immediately and report to Secretary Navy.

"STEVENS.

"(Received in Rome April 25, 1898.)"



Reproduced by courtesy of *Dodd, Mead & Co., New York*  
 Captain Mahan      Captain Crowninshield

Secretary Long

Admiral Sicard

THE NAVAL BOARD OF STRATEGY, 1898



by a force superior to any combination possible by the enemy at the moment. SECOND. In such case and in existing conditions it seems probable that Havana could be left to light vessels, swift enough to escape if unfortunately surprised by superior force. THIRD. It is improbable enemy fleet would seek to enter Havana, adding to the burden of food subsistence, unless meaning to fight, which of course we wish. FOURTH. M. does not think any enemy large ship would venture to enter any of our Atlantic ports. Torpedo vessels might, but they can be handled. FIFTH. M. heartily approves naval strategy up to date, especially refusing to oppose ships to the Havana forts. He would not favor any dispersal of battleships as he is reported to have done to guard ports against attack. SIXTH. M. requests secrecy as to his movements till his return."

Travelling incognito under the name of "A. T. Maitland," Mahan arrived in Washington a few days after the receipt of the news of Admiral Dewey's successful engagement at Manila. The attention of the Board was consequently centred upon operations around Cuba. Secretary Long, in *The New American Navy*, describes the Board as having been eminently fitted to co-ordinate the work of the Department and the fleet, and to keep a general surveillance over the large strategical and technical questions which could not be dealt with by the Commanders-in-Chief of the several squadrons. In Mr. Long's opinion "the Board possessed high intelligence and excellent judgment, and its service was invaluable in connection with the successful conduct of the war."

Immediately after reporting in Washington, Mahan, being strongly of opinion that official responsibility should be individual, addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, recommending that he, the Secretary, should have but one responsible adviser, who would of course in turn consult with any number of officers and by any methods the Department might desire.

Mahan held the conviction that the ultimate conclusion tendered to the Secretary as professional advice should be the undivided responsibility of one man, and one only. His letter was forwarded to the Secretary of the Navy through the President of the Board, but no action was taken on it. In 1903 he contributed to *Scribner's Magazine* a comprehensive article on the subject under the title of "The United States Navy Department." This was subsequently embodied in *Naval Administration and Warfare*.

Mahan did a valuable public service in August 1898, shortly after the battle of Santiago, by throwing the light of his unrivalled knowledge upon what was known at the time as the Sampson-Schley controversy, which was brought about, not by the naval commanders concerned, but by their ill-advised friends and by a section of the Press. Mahan gave practical and historic proof as to why the credit for the victory must remain with the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sampson, notwithstanding his absence and the fact that Commodore Schley and his fellow-commanders successfully carried out the details of the action as previously planned by the Commander-in-Chief.

In justice to both these brave men, two extracts from Mahan's letter to the Press on the subject are here quoted. Mahan records that in his official report to the Navy Department the Commander-in-Chief paid this tribute to Commodore Schley and the captains of the ships engaged :

"The commanding officers merit the greatest praise for the perfect manner in which they entered into this plan and put it into execution. The *Massachusetts*, which, according to routine, was sent that morning to coal at Guantanamo, like the others had spent weary nights upon this work, and deserved a better fate than to be absent that morning. When all the work was done so well, it is difficult to discriminate. The object of

the blockade of Cervera's squadron was fully accomplished, and each individual bore well his part in it—the Commodore in command of the Second Division, the captains of ships, their officers and men.”

The second extract from the same letter tells its own tale :

“ It would be improper to conclude without saying that there is not the slightest proof that Commodore Schley is in the least responsible for the malicious attempts made to depress Admiral Sampson with a view to exalt the second in command. On the contrary, when they came to his ears he telegraphed to the Navy Department (on July 10) his ‘ mortification ’ at the fact, handsomely attributing the victory to the force under the command of the Commander-in-Chief of the North Atlantic Station : ‘ to him the honour is due.’ More than this there is no occasion for him to say nor need he have said anything but for the obligation forced upon him by the indiscreet and ungenerous clamor of those posing as his friends, from whom he might well pray to be saved.”

Captain Francis J. Higginson, of the *Massachusetts*, who shared with Sampson and his flag officers on the *New York* the cruel disappointment of just missing the actual engagement by a few hours, wrote Mahan on August 27, 1898 :

“ I want to thank you very much for your article about Sampson and Schley and for the very kindly notice of myself contained therein. After working hard night and day for thirty-seven days and then missing the battle of July third by six hours, anything like praise or encomium falls upon a wounded spirit like the blessed dew from Heaven.

“ Makorff says that ‘ some men have great knowledge and little understanding, and some men have great understanding and little knowledge,’ but Sampson had both, and they were both concealed from ostentatious or offensive display by the most charming modesty

and simplicity of manner and gentleness of personal intercourse which was at the same time my despair and my delight. . . . These attacks have moved Sampson even in his Nirvana-like calm of mind, and he has felt keenly the injustice which has been showered upon him in the public press. I am sure therefore that your championship, crushing in its passionless logic, must have been very welcome to him."

Captain John S. Barnes, Naval Commander and author, to whose intelligent enterprise is due the formation of the interesting and valuable collection of naval works and naval historical relics which now constitute the Library of the Naval History Society in New York, wrote Mahan on August 9, 1898 :

"I have read your capital letter in the *Sun* newspaper. It settles, once and for all, the clamor of the hero makers of the slap-dash newspaper variety. Sampson's and Schley's reports left them agape; followed by your letter, there was nothing left for them and the newspapers which gave publicity to their mischievous efforts but to crawl into the most convenient holes accessible to them. . . . I have had many occasions to write and speak to people about this attempt to sow discord between Sampson and Schley, and it is a matter of profound gratification to me as an 'old Navy man' that my views so frequently expressed have been so completely vindicated, and that the Navy, from top to bottom, has risen superior to all petty jealousies and internal dissensions—and stands to-day in the eyes of our countrymen as 'Sans peur et sans reproche.'

"I am sure now that the controversy, originating and kept up by penny-a-liners, may be considered at an end.

"I congratulate you upon the clever way you have treated the subject in your letter."

Mahan's views on the naval and military operations of the contending forces in the Spanish-American War are published in *Lessons of the War with Spain* (1899),

which Sir John Laughton described as "an admirable and, in the best sense, popular essay on the strategy of naval war."

Some years afterwards, in 1906, Mahan was requested by the Navy Department to submit to the General Board an account of the work of the Naval War Board. This he did in a highly interesting and instructive report of some thirty pages, which he brought to a close in these words: "Fortunately the war was short and simple. Had it lasted longer, with a more efficient enemy, there could not but be mistakes which careful previous study would have prevented."

The brief and one-sided character of this three months' conflict robbed Mahan of an excellent opportunity of serving his country by the exercise of his remarkable gifts in the special sphere of knowledge in which he excelled.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FIRST HAGUE CONFERENCE

"The cause of Universal Peace, upon which so much of the world's attention has been fixed this summer by the Hague Conference, can progress surely to success only upon the same conditions by which any other movement for good reaches its goal. It will not be advanced, but retarded by neglecting diligently and calmly to consider facts, to look them straight in the face; to see things as they are, and not merely as one would wish to see them now, or as it is possible that our descendants may be privileged to see them in a future happier age."—ALFRED THAYER MAHAN, 1907.

THE first Peace Conference at the Hague met on May 18, 1899, and held its historic sessions in the "House in the Wood"—the famous summer palace of the Royal House of Holland, built over two hundred and fifty years ago by the grandmother of William of Orange.

The American Delegation consisted of the Hon. Andrew D. White, President, the Hon. Seth Low, the Hon. Stanford Newel, Captain Alfred T. Mahan, and Captain William Crozier, later Major-General Crozier, Chief of Ordnance of the United States Army. Mr. Fredk. W. Holls was appointed Secretary to the Delegation.

The deliberations of the Conference throw light on Mahan's mental attitude towards some highly important phases of modern warfare. In view of the subsequent introduction of poison gases by the German Army in the late war, perhaps one of the most interesting features was the fact that the proposal forbidding the use of projectiles, the sole purpose of which was to spread asphyxiating gases, received but one negative

vote, and that was cast by the United States Naval delegate, Captain Mahan. This resulted in the United States Delegation voting "No" in the full Committee on this proposal, and Mr. White, the President of the Delegation, has placed on record his personal disapproval of this result and the feelings of regret he experienced in connection with it. As Mahan has been subjected to a great deal of criticism on this score, it is no more than fair that the exact nature of his contentions should be recognised, and they are therefore set forth verbatim herein.

Mr. White says in his autobiography :

"As a certain disposition has been observed to attach odium to the view adopted by this Commission [i.e. the United States Delegation] in this matter, it seems proper to state fully and explicitly, for the information of the Government, that on the first occasion of the subject arising in Sub-committee, and subsequently at various times in full Committee, and before the Conference, the United States Naval delegate did not cast his vote silently, but gave the reasons, which at his demand were inserted in the reports of the day's proceedings.

"These reasons were briefly: '1. That no shell emitting such gas is as yet in practical use, or has undergone adequate experiment; consequently, a vote taken now would be in ignorance of the facts as to whether the results would be of a decisive character, or whether injury in excess of that necessary to attain the end of warfare, the immediate disabling of the enemy, would be inflicted.

"'2. That the reproach of cruelty and perfidy addressed against these supposed shells was equally uttered formerly against firearms and torpedoes, both of which are now employed without scruple. Until we knew the effects of such asphyxiating shells there was no saying whether they would be more or less merciful than missiles now permitted.

"'3. That it was illogical, and not demonstrably

humane, to be tender about asphyxiating men with gas, when all were prepared to admit that it was allowable to blow the bottom out of an ironclad at midnight, throwing four or five hundred men into the sea, to be choked by water, with scarcely the remotest chance of escape. If, and when, a shell emitting asphyxiating gases alone has been successfully produced, then, and not before, men will be able to vote intelligently on the subject.' ”

From this it is evident that it was no motive of cruelty, but what might be described as academic caution, which influenced Mahan at that time to record his vote against the proposal to prohibit the use of asphyxiating gases. Anyone who knew him would appreciate, that in the light of the information which has come to us of the inhuman character of these gases and of the horrible sufferings which the use of them entails, he would have been the last man to advocate their employment.

The correct interpretation of his intentions would seem to be that while he did not advocate their use, he contended that little or nothing was known as to their effects, and his object ostensibly was to preserve for the benefit of the United States any advantages which might accrue to them from the skill of American chemists in the invention and manufacture of this type of destructive force.

It might further be contended that Mahan's attitude was in keeping with the Secretary of State's instructions to the Delegation, which were expressed in these prophetic words :

“ It is doubtful if wars will be diminished by rendering them less destructive, for it is the plain lesson of history that the periods of peace have been longer protracted as the cost and destructiveness of war have increased. The expediency of restraining the inventive genius of our people in the direction of devising means of



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Captain M. W. Crozier

S. Newel

A. D. White

Seth Low

Captain Mahan

F. W. Holls

AMERICAN DELEGATES TO THE HAGUE CONFERENCE, 1899



defence is by no means clear, and, considering the temptations to which men and nations may be exposed in a time of conflict, it is doubtful if an international agreement of this nature would prove effective."

Mr. White expressed his sentiments in this wise :

" To this [Captain Mahan's argument] it was answered and, as it seemed to me, with force—that asphyxiating bombs might be used against towns for the destruction of vast numbers of non-combatants, including women and children, while torpedoes at sea are used only against the military and naval forces of the enemy. The original proposal was carried by a unanimous vote, save ours. I am not satisfied with our attitude on this question ; but what can a layman do when he has against him the foremost contemporary military and naval experts ? My hope is that the United States will yet stand with the majority on the record."

The declaration to " abstain from the use of projectiles, the object of which is the use of asphyxiating or deleterious gases," was ultimately signed by the Delegations of all the twenty-six countries represented, with the exception of the United States and of Great Britain. The British delegates voted in favour of the proposal provided it was agreed to unanimously. In the Hague Conference of 1907 the Government of Great Britain instructed its delegates to vote in favour of the declaration. This was done, leaving the United States in sole opposition to it. In the first battle of Ypres Germany threw its sacred covenant to the winds, obtaining temporary advantage by the use of deadly gases, which had been specially invented by German chemists for the purpose.

It was Admiral Mahan who introduced to the attention of the members of the American Delegation the expediency of incorporating in the official record of the Proceedings of the First Peace Conference at the Hague the famous reservation touching the Monroe Doctrine.

“For some days,” says Mr. Andrew White, “in fact ever since Captain Mahan on the 22nd called attention to Article 27 of the arbitration convention as likely to be considered an infringement of the Monroe Doctrine, our American Delegation has been greatly perplexed.”

According to Mr. Frederick W. Holls, Secretary to the American Delegation :

“The declaration was presented in the full session of the Conference on July 25, read by the Secretary of the Conference, and unanimously directed to be spread upon the minutes and added to the convention by a reference opposite the signatures of the American plenipotentiaries. The importance of the proceeding, so far as the United States of America is concerned, will readily be seen. Never before that day had the Monroe Doctrine been officially communicated to the representatives of all the Great Powers, and never before was it received with all the consent implied by a cordial acquiescence, and the immediate and unanimous adoption of the treaty upon that condition.”

The declaration was to this effect :

“Nothing contained in this convention shall be so construed as to require the United States of America to depart from its traditional policy of not entering upon, interfering with, or entangling itself in the political questions or internal administration of any foreign State, nor shall anything contained in the said convention be so construed as to require the relinquishment, by the United States of America, of its traditional attitude towards purely American questions.”

Mr. Andrew White records that :

“The Conference was asked whether anyone had any objection, or anything to say regarding it. There was a pause of about a minute which seemed to me about an hour. Not a word was said—in fact there was dead

silence—and so our declaration embodying a reservation in favor of the Monroc Doctrine was duly recorded and became part of the proceedings.”

At the Conference the impression Mahan made upon the mind of a London editor—probably Mr. Henry Labouchere—is thus described in *Truth* :

“ No American of distinction used to be more lionised by his compatriots in Paris than Admiral Mahan from the time he published *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. At the Hague Conference he played the part of good listener. Of all the delegates there he appeared to me to be the most thoughtful, as Sir John Fisher seemed to me to have the most buoyant and almost boyish freshness. Most of the delegates came with minds, as it were, made up according to briefs they held. Mahan had the deepest seriousness of all. This and his unassuming manner allied with manfulness gave him prominence. He thought before he spoke, and only spoke to convey with discretion just what he thought. No entrance he ever made in a log could be plainer, more truthful, or bear more clearly the impression of the inner man.”

There are few incidents in Mahan's career more eloquent of the strength of his character than the courage and tenacity with which he clung to his convictions at this Conference, particularly as neither his Government nor his colleagues were in sympathy with his views in several important particulars, more especially in connection with that vitally material question of the immunity of private property at sea. The measure of his influence on this occasion may be gauged by the difficulties experienced by President Andrew White in reconciling the views of the other American delegates and the instructions of the Government, on the one hand, with the dispassionate logic of Mahan, on the other.

Let Mr. White speak in his own words. In his autobiography he says :

"Then to the hotel and began work on the draft of a report, regarding the whole work of the conference, to the State Department. I was especially embarrassed by the fact that the wording of it must be suited to the scruples of my colleague Captain Mahan. He is a man of the highest character and of great ability, whom I respect and greatly like ; but, as an old naval officer, wedded to the views generally entertained by older members of the naval and military service, he has had very little, if any, sympathy with the main purposes of the Conference, and has not hesitated to declare his disbelief in some of the measures which we were especially instructed to press. In his books he is on record against the immunity of private property at sea, and in drawing up our memorial to the Conference regarding this latter matter, in making my speech with reference to it in the Conference, and in preparing our report to the State Department, I have been embarrassed by this fact. It was important to have unanimity, and it could not be had, so far as he was concerned, without toning down the whole thing, and, indeed, leaving out much that, in my judgment, the documents emanating from us on the subject ought to contain. So now, in regard to arbitration, as well as the other measures finally adopted, his feelings must be considered. Still, his views have been an excellent tonic ; they have effectively prevented any lapse into sentimentality. When he speaks the millennium fades and this stern, severe, actual world appears."

A tribute from so eminent an American citizen as Mr. Seth Low, one of the most distinguished of Mahan's colleagues at the Conference, may be fitly here presented :

" 30, EAST 64TH STREET,  
" December 6, 1914.

" DEAR MRS. MAHAN,—

" My acquaintance with Admiral Mahan has always been to me a source of great pleasure and of personal profit, for there was mingled in him so much

earnestness as to make him always both a pleasant companion and an inspiring friend.

"I particularly enjoyed my association with him at the Hague Conference in 1899. I once said of him, when speaking to the American School at Rome, that his achievement in discovering such a book as *Sea Power in History* in the musty ashes of the Punic Wars, as he himself told me that he did, was an encouragement to every student to study the past with understanding eyes, in the assurance that its lessons have not yet all been learned.

"The Admiral's place as an historian is assured. I send to you and yours the sympathy of one who feels that in the Admiral's death he has lost a valued friend.

"Sincerely yours,

"SETH LOW."

In a special memorial article in *The New York Times* of December 1, 1914, the day Mahan passed away in Washington, occurs this appreciation of his services at the Hague :

"There were distinct reasons why the American people congratulated themselves upon the presence of Admiral Mahan (then Captain Mahan) in the first Hague Conference. He was not only a naval strategist and scholar, but was even then regarded as the most eminent living expert in naval strategy. Then he had always consistently advocated strong navies and preparedness for war with special reference to naval influence in making for peace. Added to his equipment as a diplomatist in the delicate and complex task before the Hague Conference was his experience as a public man who had been hailed as the first great exponent of the philosophy of sea power."

These words seem to strike the keynote of Mahan's attitude towards peace, for he was a humanitarian who believed in the maintenance of such naval strength as might reasonably be deemed sufficient to deter any possible enemy from breaking the peace.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CHESNEY GOLD MEDAL

"Admiral Mahan was not only a fine type of naval officer, but possessed a lovable character that endeared him to all with whom he came in contact. His attainments, which gave him a world-wide renown, were of immeasurable value to the country he loved and served, and though he is gone, his works happily remain as a guide and inspiration not only for this generation, but for all that are to come."—JOSEPHUS DANIELS, Secretary of the Navy.

A UNIQUE honour was yet to be added to the sum of Mahan's triumphs in England.

In the year 1622 that portion of the new Palace of Whitehall known as the Banqueting House was completed from the original design of Inigo Jones. The ceiling was painted by Rubens, and down its length, under the glorious colouring of those nine magnificent panels which the monarch himself had commissioned the great artist to produce, passed King Charles I through one of its windows<sup>1</sup> facing on Whitehall to his tragic fate on the rude wooden scaffold outside.

This beautiful building now shelters the Naval and Military Museum of the Royal United Service Institution, which on June 25, 1831, at the Thatched House Tavern in St. James's Street, was founded by a number of highly distinguished naval and military officers. Subsequently it was established in its permanent abode in the fine building erected for the purpose next door to

<sup>1</sup> Or possibly through a part of one of the window spaces which were then solid on the Whitehall frontage, but from which the bricks had been specially removed for the occasion—one of the many precautions taken by the regicides from fear of a popular demonstration.

the Banqueting House, which contains, among other exhibits of historic interest, numerous relics of Napoleon, including the skeleton of his famous grey horse, Marengo, and large models of Trafalgar and the Battle of Waterloo.<sup>1</sup>

So it came about that nearly three hundred years later a nineteenth-century institution of illustrious origin and associations, housing its priceless historic treasures in this famous old landmark of bygone days, elected to confer upon Mahan a conspicuous and unexpected honour.

The Council of the Institution, under the Presidency of the Duke of Cambridge, a lifelong soldier, cousin of Queen Victoria, and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, unanimously resolved to invite Mahan to accept the distinction of the first award of the Chesney Gold Medal.

This honour was enhanced not only by the circumstances of the award being made before any of the eminent naval writers of the day had been selected, but by the additional fact that writers on military subjects were also eligible for the distinction. Much to his surprise and gratification, Mahan received the following letter from Mr. Long, Secretary of the Navy :

"NAVY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON,  
"June 30, 1900.

"SIR,—

"I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter addressed by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, President of the United Service Institution, to yourself, conveying to you the award of the Chesney Gold Medal in recognition of your literary works bearing on the welfare of the British Empire, together

<sup>1</sup> The modern exhibits include a fine specimen of that epoch-marking English invention the Whitehead torpedo, which has revolutionised naval warfare. The beauties of the Rubens ceiling are best examined by means of a looking-glass held in the hand, for the proportions of that Inigo Jones masterpiece are such that the painter's brilliant conception is more than fifty feet overhead.

with the gold medal, both having been received from the State Department through the British Ambassador at the Capitol.

"I take great pleasure in forwarding you the medal and the letter, and in assuring you that I consider it a great honour to the Naval Service of the United States.

"Yours very respectfully,

"JOHN D. LONG,

"*Secretary.*

"Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S.N. Retired,

"160, West 86th Street,

"New York, N.Y."

The gold medal, of the beauty of which the reproductions by Tiffany on another page give some conception, was accompanied by this communication from the Duke of Cambridge :

"ROYAL UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION, WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.,

"May 31, 1900.

"SIR,—

"The Council of the Royal United Service Institution of Great Britain, of which I am President, have requested me to be the medium of communicating to you a resolution which was carried at a recent meeting of their body.

"The Gold Medal, founded in memory of the late General Sir George Chesney, a distinguished officer of the Royal Engineers, is to be awarded, from time to time, on the decision of the Council of the Royal United Service Institution, to the author who has produced an original literary work, treating of naval or military science and literature, and which has a bearing on the welfare of the British Empire.

"The first award of the medal having come under the consideration of the Council, it was resolved that you should be invited to accept the distinction, in consideration of the three great works of which you are the author: *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, and *The Life of Nelson*.

"It is a matter of satisfaction to me to be the means of assuring you that the award has been made at the unanimous wish of the Royal United Service Institution of this country, which was founded, and is maintained, for the promotion of naval and military art, science, and literature in the British Empire.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"GEORGE,

"*President.*

"Captain A. T. Mahan, D.C.L., LL.D.,

"United States Navy."

Here is Mahan's reply :

"QUOGUE, NEW YORK,

"July 10, 1900.

"His Royal Highness

"The Duke of Cambridge.

"SIR,—

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st May, transmitting to me the Chesney Gold Medal, with the gratifying notification that the Council of the Royal United Service Institution have awarded it to me in recognition of the bearing of my works—*The Influence of Sea Power* and *The Life of Nelson*—upon the welfare of the British Empire.

"In expressing my thanks it seems scarcely necessary to say how deeply I feel the personal honour of this distinction conferred by the unanimous wish of a professional organisation of the high standing of this, over which Your Royal Highness presides. May I be permitted to add that I value even more highly, if that be possible, the assurance that, in such competent judgment, my works have contributed in some degree to the welfare of the British Empire, the strength of which is so essential to the cause of our English-speaking race and of mankind in general ?

"With profoundest respect,

"Your most obedient servant,

"A. T. MAHAN,

"*Captain, U.S. Navy.*"

General Sir George Chesney, although by profession an officer of the Royal Engineers, and eventually a Member of Parliament, was more widely known to fame as the author of *The Battle of Dorking*, an historical allegory, which so dramatically described the invasion of England and the destruction of the British Fleet by the Germans as to create a nation-wide sensation.

A couple of years later Mahan received a further announcement from Colonel Holder, Secretary of the Institution, and this is what it contained :

" ROYAL UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION, WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.,  
" November 10, 1902.

" SIR,—

" I have the honour to inform you that, at a meeting of the Council held on the 4th instant, you were, subject to your acceptance, unanimously elected an Honorary Member for Life of the Royal United Service Institution, in consideration of your valuable contributions to literature bearing on the Naval History of Great Britain.

" I have the honour to be, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" A. HOLDER,

" *Lt.-Colonel, Secretary.*

" Captain Alfred T. Mahan, D.C.L., LL.D.,

" United States Navy."

The award of the Chesney Gold Medal under the circumstances described, although to the man in the street possibly an event of comparatively little significance at the time, will now appeal to all advocates of the promotion of cordial Anglo-American relations as a powerful link in the chain which is daily binding the two nations closer together in the cause of human happiness ; for it struck a new and resonant note in American literary achievement, and recorded with no uncertain voice the appreciation and gratitude of a great nation for the voluntary performance of a friendly and invaluable national service on the part of an American naval officer.

## CHAPTER XII

### OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

"Few beyond his family and his intimate friends knew him as he really was. The strength and sympathetic nature of his character were not worn on his sleeve. His mind was in an upper story above us all."—ADMIRAL CHARLES H. STOCKTON, U.S. Navy.

IN 1896 Mahan retired as Captain on his own application, after forty years' service in the Navy. He was then fifty-six, but for sixteen years after this he was employed by the Government in various capacities and was retained for special duty in connection with the Naval War College, of which he had twice been President.

Following the distinguished example of Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard University in 1895, and Yale two years later, conferred upon Mahan the degree of LL.D.

It was not until the year 1900, ten years after the publication of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, that his own *alma mater*, Columbia, conferred a similar degree, an honour which he also received some years later from Dartmouth College and, subsequently, in 1909, from McGill University, Montreal.

When Prince Henry of Prussia visited America, Mahan was appointed a member of the Committee of Reception. At Cowes in 1895 the German Emperor had entertained him on his yacht *Hohenzollern*, and had presented him with a large framed photograph of himself, bearing his autograph.

He was President of the American Historical Association in 1902, and an honorary member of the Society of American Arts and Letters and of the National

Institute of Arts and Letters. His scholarly address as President of the American Historical Association can be found in *Naval Administration and Warfare*, under the title of *Subordination in Historical Treatment*. In 1894 he had been elected a corresponding member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, being similarly honoured by the Geographical Society of Lisboa, and a few years later the Minnesota Historical Society elected him an honorary member. Had he in any way sought them directly or indirectly, there would have been no limit to the distinctions he could have received from learned societies and eminent personages all over the world.

Writing to a friend in 1910, he said :

“ You do not seem as impressed as I myself am with the fact that I have attained three score and ten. The term is so significant with me that I look now upon my easing life as a kind of appendix. I was immensely surprised and, I own, pleased, to receive by cable congratulations on the day from a Dutch Admiral in the name of the officers of their Navy, and also from the Dutch Navy League.”

He served on several important committees during President Roosevelt's administration. In 1909 he was appointed by the President a member of a Commission to report on the reorganisation of the Navy Department. The results of the deliberations of this body were subsequently made known to Congress by the President. The Commission,<sup>1</sup> which included such distinguished men as Admiral Luce and Admiral Robley Evans, substantially endorsed Mahan's views, and among other interesting controversial questions recommended that the officer best fitted to command the

<sup>1</sup> Consisting of the Hon. William H. Moody, Hon. Alston G. Dayton, Hon. Paul Morton, Rear-Admiral S. B. Luce, Rear-Admiral A. T. Mahan, Rear-Admiral Robley D. Evans, Rear-Admiral William M. Folger, and Rear-Admiral William S. Cowles.

great fleet in time of war should be appointed head of a permanent advisory board, and that he alone should be the responsible adviser of the Secretary of the Navy.

On the recommendation of this Commission, the President nominated a joint Commission of naval and military men, including Admiral Sperry, General Franklin Bell, and other prominent officers,<sup>1</sup> to report on matters vital to national defence, more especially in connection with the location of Navy yards and Navy bases. Over this Commission Mahan was chosen to preside. Here is his letter of appointment :

“ SIR,

“ I desire to appoint you as Chairman of a Commission for the purposes indicated in my Message to Congress, of which I send you herewith a copy.

“ I also send you herewith copy of a memorandum prepared for me by a naval officer of high rank, to which I invite your attention in connection with your work.

“ Sincerely yours,

“ THEODORE ROOSEVELT.”

It would be difficult to estimate how much of the growth and efficiency of the United States Navy the American people owe to the resourceful brain, untiring energies and foresight of Mr. Roosevelt, among whose innumerable activities for the public welfare was the formation of a Committee on Department Methods, on one of the sub-committees of which Mahan sat and advised on historical records and naval archives. No wonder Mr. Roosevelt appeals to the strenuous section of the community. Throughout the United States the two most popular things would seem to be the strains of “ Dixie ” and the mention of Theodore

<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral A. T. Mahan, Chairman ; Rear-Admiral Richard Wainwright ; Captain C. McR. Winslow ; Brigadier-General W. W. Wetherspoon, General Staff, President Army War College ; Brigadier-General W. L. Marshall, Chief of Engineers.

Roosevelt's name. Both command instant acclaim.<sup>1</sup> Some idea of the fertility of that restless mind may be had by analysing the far-reaching scope and purport of the directions given to the members of the Commission on Naval Reorganisation.

This is the text of the letter of appointment written to Mahan and the other members of the Commission :

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I have appointed you as a member of a Commission to consider certain needs of the Navy. The organisation of the Department is now not such as to bring the best results, and there is a failure to co-ordinate the work of the Bureaus and to make the Department serve the one end for which it was created, that is, the development and handling of a first-class fighting fleet. With this proposition in view I will ask you to consider :

“ 1. All defects in the law under which the Navy Department is now organised, including especially the defects by which the authority of Chiefs of Bureaus is made in certain respects practically equal to that of the Secretary or the President.

“ 2. The division of responsibility and consequent lack of co-ordination in the preparations for war and conduct of war.

“ 3. The functions of certain Bureaus, so as to see whether it is not possible to consolidate them.

“ 4. The necessity of providing the Secretary of the Navy with military advisers, who are responsible to him for co-ordinating the work of the Bureaus and for preparation for war.

“ 5. The necessity for economical allotment and disbursement of appropriations and for a system which will secure strict accountability.

“ 6. Finally, I want your views as to how best to recognise and emphasise the strictly military character of the Navy, so that preparations for war shall be controlled under the Secretary by the military branch

<sup>1</sup> Written before Mr. Roosevelt's death.



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**THEODORE ROOSEVELT.**



of the Navy, which bears the responsibility for the successful conduct of war operations.

"I wish to have the above subjects considered under two general heads :

"First, as to the fundamental principles of an organisation that will insure an efficient preparation for war in time of peace, a separate report under this head to be submitted at the earliest practicable date.

"Second, specific recommendations as to the changes in the present organisation that will accomplish this result, the report under this head to be submitted later.

"In addition to the above reports I desire your recommendation as to the number, location, and general facilities of the Navy yards which are required by strategic considerations in time of war and for maintaining the fleet in constant readiness for war in time of peace.

"Sincerely yours,

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

Acting under instructions from the Navy Department, Mahan gave lectures at the sessions of the Naval War College held in 1909, 1910, and 1911. About this time he also appeared before the House Naval Committee in connection with matters affecting the Council for the National Defence. He was detached from all official duty on June 6, 1912, three months before his seventy-second birthday, having given fifty-six years of his life to the service of his country.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LATER PUBLICATIONS

To mortals are the parents of Genius unknown. Chief among her progenitors is Symmetry. Her good fairy is Adversity. Gold impedes her development. Wayward and capricious is she, incomparably endowed, surpassing knowledge. To Eccentricity, first cousin. Brothers and sisters has she, most rare and precious ; Charm, Beauty, the Matchless Voice, the Flawless Emerald, the Sinless Soul. One thing it is given to mortals to know ; the foster-mother of Genius is Industry.

SOME of the attributes of genius Mahan possessed : industry, perseverance, vision, and the capacity for taking infinite pains. The fact that he wrote *The Life of Nelson* when he was fifty-five years of age, and the other works mentioned in this chapter between the fifty-seventh and seventy-second years of his life, may prove of encouragement to those who have already passed middle age, yet feel that they have a message to deliver. The sixteen years from 1896 to 1912 were productive of an immense amount of valuable work, and gave to the world, in addition to the greatest *Life of Nelson* yet written, a large number of highly interesting articles which were first published in leading periodicals of the day, including, among others, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *North American Review*, *Scribner's*, *Century*, *Harper's New Monthly*, *Forum*, *Leslie's*, *World's Work*, *McClure's*, and the *National Review*. These were then issued in book form under the titles of *The Interest of America in Sea Power Present and Future* (1897), *Lessons of the War with Spain* (1899), *The Problem of Asia* (1900), *Retrospect and Prospect* (1902), *Some Neglected Aspects of War* (1907), *Naval Administra-*

*tion and Warfare* (1908), and *Armaments and Arbitration* (1912), referred to elsewhere.

The idea of enlightening the public mind in the United States on questions of politico-naval import through the medium of magazine articles probably emanated in the first instance from the Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, who wrote Mahan the following letter in August 1890 :

"EDITORIAL OFFICE OF 'THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY,' BOSTON,  
"August 27, 1890.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have been struck with a passage on p. 42 of your admirable work on *The Influence of Sea Power*, in which you call attention to the defenceless condition of the Pacific coast in the event of the piercing of the Isthmus. It raises the question in my mind whether you may not have material for an interesting paper of say 4,000 words in the *Atlantic*, expanding the suggestion. That is to say, the centre of maritime operations has shifted once from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. It may pass in the distant future to the Pacific. Meanwhile, would not the completion of a canal taken with the British movements at the terminus of the Canadian Pacific and occidentalising of Japan and the growth of Australasia immensely quicken the process? and if this be so, will not the Pacific coast of our country become a far more potent factor in our historical development than it has been, and is not Government bound to take steps for the protection of that frontier? I believe you once served on a Commission charged with the selection of a site for a Navy yard on the north-west coast, and I fancy these subjects have more or less occupied your mind.

"Perhaps I am outlining too broad a paper, but I wished to indicate my pleasure in your book, and my hope that you might be induced to give us such an article as the above or one on some kindred topic.

"Very truly yours,

"HORACE E. SCUDDER,

"Ed., *Atlantic Monthly*.

"Capt. A. T. Mahan."

The outcome of this suggestion was the publication of several articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* and other periodicals between 1890 and 1897, in which latter year they appeared in book form as *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*.

Into no other language—with the possible exception of German—have so many of Mahan's books been translated as into Japanese; and it would be difficult to estimate the extent to which the remarkable growth of the Japanese Navy has been due to his writings. In 1897 the Oriental Association of Tokyo sent Mahan the following communication :

“ 'Tis the greatest honor of mine to inform you that your valuable work on *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* is lately translated by the Club of Naval Officers into our own language and published from our association in such a form as you see under separate cover. The association was first organised in 1892, and has at present 1,300 ministers of State, members of the Diet, civil and military officers, editors, bankers, merchants, nay, all sorts of our educational people, as its members. The chief aim of the association is to investigate various questions of policy and diplomacy, both historical and contemporary. To realise the purpose we have been having an occasional public lecture, issuing a monthly report, publishing several books of diplomatical value, dispatching our own correspondents to seats of questions, submitting our proposals to the consideration of our Department of Foreign Affairs, etc., etc.

“ Translation of your valuable book we adopted as one of our honorable transactions. Our purpose was, indeed, to give our countrymen the knowledge of naval affairs, at present the most important knowledge in this part of the world. The facts show that our humble purpose is realised. The Japanese edition of your valuable work attracted the attention of our public, the Naval and Military Colleges have adopted it as their textbook.

“ We presented a volume to each of Their Majesties

the Emperor and Crown Prince of Japan and received an honor of Their Majesties' approval. Subsequently the Imperial Household Department bought from us three hundred volumes in accordance with the royal purpose of subscribing to every middle, higher middle,

不<sup>レ</sup>特<sup>ニ</sup>海軍の著書が兵學研  
究の世界的權威として永  
久に最<sup>ニ</sup>高<sup>ニ</sup>の位置を占む  
ることを各國海軍兵學家  
の皆齊く承認する所とし  
て、海軍の遠大なる識見  
に對し深厚なる敬意を表するもの  
なり

TRANSLATION OF ADMIRAL COUNT TOGO'S TRIBUTE TO  
ADMIRAL MAHAN

"Naval strategists of all nations are of one opinion that Admiral Mahan's works will for ever occupy the highest position as a world-wide authority in the study of military science. I express my deep and cordial reverence for his far-reaching knowledge and keen judgement.

"ADMIRAL COUNT HEIHACHIRO TOGO.

"May 8th, the 7th year of Taisho."

and normal school in Japan. To tell the truth, several thousand volumes were sold in a day or two.

"These parts already published correspond to the first volume of your original copy. So for the second

and third volumes, they are now under translation by the same club and will be published soon after.

“We will be much obliged if you will send us any other work of yours useful to our association and country.”

A notable endorsement of Mahan's world-wide influence will be found in the autograph tribute of that distinguished Japanese veteran Admiral Count Togo which is here reproduced, and which Admiral Togo graciously wrote for this book.

When *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* was translated into the Japanese language, the Hon. Kentaro Kaneko, ex-Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, wrote this preface for it :

“While on a tour of inspection through Europe and America in 1899, under Japanese Government, I came across for the first time a book entitled *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, by Captain Mahan, the author of the present volume. In reading through the book many points of doubt which had for years existed in my mind were all cleared away. After coming home I had a part of the introduction of the book translated and showed it to Count Saigo, then Minister of the Navy, who in turn gave it to Suikosha to be published in its reports. Since then every issue of his work has been carefully read.

“His work just mentioned caused great awakening in the world. *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire* has put the French people to astonishment. His *Life of Nelson*, *The Embodiment of the Sea Power of Great Britain*, opened the eyes of the English people; and now *The Interest of America in Sea Power* awakens the Americans from their sleep. These are all standard works and cannot be excelled.

“My friend, Mr. M. Minakami, has in the intervals of his official duties recently translated Captain Mahan's work on *The Interest of America in Sea Power*, and

published it under the title of *The Sea Power in the Pacific Ocean*.

"Our Empire, recognised as the foremost of maritime countries in the Pacific, should, in spite of the short time since her awakening, become conscious of this fact, and increase more and more her power as such among the nations of the world.

"My desire is that my fellow-countrymen should read this book in such a spirit, and put forth an effort to make their country a great sea power in the Pacific Ocean.

"KENTARO KANEKO.

"April 1899."

Senator Lodge's opinion of Mahan's standing as an authority on naval warfare is reflected in the following letter received about this time :

"*Personal.*

"UNITED STATES SENATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.,

"October 19, 1898.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

"Many thanks for your kind note of the 18th, which gives me just the information I wanted.

"I am very glad to know that you are going to write papers for the *Century* on the two great battles of Santiago and Manila. Mine will be simply the popular treatment of those actions by the general historian, whereas yours will be a conclusive discussion by the greatest authority living or dead on naval warfare. I do not think that they are likely to clash in any way, although I think it highly probable that my general conception may accord with your views, for I venture to hope that I have not studied your teachings upon this subject wholly in vain.

"With kindest regards,

"Very sincerely yours,

"H. C. LODGE.

"Captain A. T. Mahan."

The year 1900 saw the publication of *Types of Naval Officers*, one of the most attractive and interesting of

all his books. His critical analysis of military operations in *The Story of the War in South Africa* appeals to students of modern warfare on land. A German General wrote from Göttingen asking permission to translate it for the benefit of his countrymen. Here is his letter :

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Yesterday I read in the *Daily News*, that there is about to appear in London a history of the war in South Africa by Captain A. Mahan. As I am well acquainted with your excellent work *The Influence of Sea Power on History*, I take it for granted that your new performance will give a description of the Boer War as clear and impartial as the existing circumstances permit.

“ Nobody is more in want of such a book as my countrymen, where sound judgment is clouded by an Anglophobia that passes all bounds.

“ I take therefore the liberty to ask you, if you will authorise me to translate the history of the war in South Africa into the German language.

“ Looking forward to a kind answer,

“ I am, my dear Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ C. SCHWARTZ,

“ *Major-General.*”

To this *Collier's* made no objection :

“ ‘COLLIER'S WEEKLY,’ EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT,  
“ NEW YORK, November 21, 1900.

“ DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

“ In reply to yours of November 20. There can be no possible objection on our part to the translation into German of your book on the South African War, nor should I consider such a translation to infringe in any sense upon the English and colonial rights which Mr. Marston secured from me, provided only that the translation shall not be sold in England or the English colonies. You have, therefore, my full

permission to accede to Major-General Schwartz's request. As a matter of form it might be well for you to advise Mr. Marston of the request and of my consent to the acceptance of it.

"Very truly yours,

"ROBERT J. COLLIER."

Nor was this the only one of these later publications to be translated into a foreign language :

"ST. DUNSTAN'S HOUSE, FETTER LANE,

"LONDON, E.C., December 14, 1904.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

"I have an offer of 500 francs (say £20) for the exclusive rights for the French language for a translation of *The Interest of America in Sea Power*. I have told the Paris Professor who makes the offer that I doubt if you will think it enough.

"The difficulty is to get more. I expect there is truth in what he says as to the work addressing itself to a special restricted public.

"His address is—Professor Izoulet, 2 Boulevard St. Germain, Paris, in case you would like to write to him direct, or perhaps get your brother to call on him. You might ask for £25, but I think you would be wise to take £20, if he will not rise.

"With all good wishes for you and yours for Christmas and the New Year,

"I am, yours sincerely,

"R. B. MARSTON.

"We have been hoping you would be on that Interntl. Naval Commission."

Towards the end of 1901 Mahan began contributing articles to the *National Review*. Five of these appear in the collection of essays published in 1902 under the title *Retrospect and Prospect*. The association appears to have been mutually beneficial and agreeable, and the interesting letters of the Editor, Mr. Maxse, abound

in expressions of appreciation of Mahan's contributions, as the following extracts bear witness :

“ I think you may be interested to receive the first impressions which your article has made on the leading British newspapers. I sent round advance copies yesterday, and all that I have seen refer to it in their first leading article this morning, and I feel pretty sure it is the same in the leading provincial papers. It is certainly a long time since any *Review* article has received such a reception in the newspapers, and you will see from the tone of the articles how greatly appreciated it is. I cannot help being glad that you animadvert, though with much discretion and reserve, upon the conduct of our Government. I could not well exaggerate the enjoyment with which I read it. I earnestly hope that, as I have been so fortunate in inducing you to become a contributor to the *National Review*, when you may be next disposed to say something to the British public you will make use of the same organ, which will always be at your service.”

These remarks referred to *The Influence of the South African War upon the Prestige of the British Empire*, and were followed by this invitation to contribute further articles :

“ During the Persian Gulf discussion, which has now gone on for some months, your name has been constantly appealed to, as you may observe from the enclosed letter written in yesterday's *Times* by Captain Younghusband. Would you not write an article for the *National Review* on the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf ? We dread the reproduction in the Persian Gulf of a similar situation to that which occurred in the Gulf of Pechili, when Germany went to Kiouchou, thus driving Russia into Port Arthur and ourselves to Wei-hai-wei. Those behind the scenes are convinced that Germany intends to play a similar game in the Persian Gulf.

I should indeed be a proud Editor if I thought that

during the next year I might expect to have such subjects discussed by you in the *National Review* as (1) the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf; (2) the strategic distribution of British squadrons; (3) the present position of the Monroe Doctrine; (4) the problem of the Far East; and possibly (5) the real objective of the German Navy?

“Is there any chance of your being willing to promote the dispassionate discussion of some of these questions from the independent standpoint which you almost alone among living writers seem to be able to adopt? I need not say how delighted I should be if you were favourably disposed to entertain this suggestion.”

The next article to appear was *Motives to Imperial Federation*, and this is what Mr. Maxse said of it:

“Your paper on Imperial Federation has made a great impression on all thoughtful people, and has been very widely read. In spite of the extraordinary amount of topics pressing for notice in the middle of the Session, it had the remarkable reception it deserved. In the most important speech he has made this year Mr. Chamberlain used your comparison of Ireland and South Africa for his peroration, as you have probably seen. Your essay will help very much in forming and guiding sound opinion in what I cannot help thinking may prove to be one of the most pregnant years in our existence as an Empire. The Colonial Premiers will be arriving within a few weeks, anxious to put forward the predominant views of each of their localities, and they will be met by British statesmen, many of whom are only ‘imperial’ in name, and taking a purely local British view. Your article will help both parties to see the whole subject in its proper perspective. It is a great honour to the *National Review* to be the medium for such a pronouncement.

“We all wish you were going to be over here for the Colonial Conference as *amicus curiæ*.”

Next followed *Considerations Governing the Disposition of Navies* and *The Persian Gulf and International*

*Relations*, and the Editor of the *National Review* wrote Mahan, who was then in America :

“ Many thanks for your note of May 23 announcing the approaching departure of your paper on the disposition of Navies, which I look forward to with the greatest pleasure, all the more as it could hardly arrive at a more opportune moment. I shall publish it, of course, in the July number.

One of the great features, if I may be permitted to say so, of your honoured assistance has been that the *National Review* has occupied the proud position this year of enjoying a monopoly of your pronouncements on the great questions which you have discussed on this side. This, of course, has immensely added to their value from the editorial point of view. We have been so lucky, if I may use the plural, in the really remarkable timeliness of your papers during the past year ; the one, for example, on the Persian Gulf, following on the visit of the Shah of Persia, making the whole question instinct with actuality, to say nothing of the strategic paper published in the middle of our great naval discussions ; while that on the South African War appeared on the eve of the negotiations which terminated the war. These utterances were recognised on all hands as being the most important on their respective subjects which had yet been made.”

A continuance of these happy relations is reflected in these concluding extracts from Mr. Maxse's letters :

“ I am delighted to hear that you contemplate a further paper discussing the relation of the Monroe Doctrine to World-politics, which undoubtedly excites greater interest on this side of the Atlantic, either in England or on the Continent, than any other international question at the present time, and I need not say that it will be most welcome to the *National Review* whenever you find yourself at leisure to write it.

“ Your previous contributions to the *National Review* during the last few months have given it a great lift, and I think it is not my personal bias which makes me

say that it is now regarded by people who take a serious interest in the larger political issues as the leading English review.

"It is clearly understood that I am to take three articles from you during the next year at the rate of 500 dollars each, you to have the right of republication in book form within two months of the appearance of the final article."

On the suggestion of Messrs. Harper & Brothers,<sup>1</sup> Mahan wrote in 1906, under the title of *From Sail to Steam*, his recollections of naval life, a type of breezy autobiography which reflects his old-world simplicity and his own particular brand of that "blessed sense of humour which rainbows the tears of the world." Autobiography has its own peculiar limitations, as Frances Ridley Havergal has said :

"Ah no ! We write our lives indeed, but in a cypher none can read except the author, for though he break the seal, no power has he to give the key, no license to reveal. We wait the all-declaring day, when love shall know as it is known ; till then the secrets of our lives are ours and God's alone."

Here is Harper & Brothers' letter covering the arrangement for the publication of *From Sail to Steam* :

"HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK CITY,  
"August 30, 1906.

"DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

"We are writing to say that we accept the proposition in regard to the serial and book publication of your Recollections which you were good enough to make yesterday.

"A copy of your memorandum follows :

"I will agree to concede all serial rights in the *Recollections of My Life* (or whatever title chosen) to

<sup>1</sup> "You will be amused to hear that at the request of one of our big publishing houses I am writing my Recollections. At first I laughed, 'Nothing ever happened to me,' but what with old naval yarns, etc., etc., and incidents of one sort or another, I am surprised how many words I have written."—A. T. M.

Harper & Brothers for \$3,000 (three thousand dollars), with subsequent book publication, subject to a royalty to me of fifteen per cent. of retail price; with the reservation that after lapse of five years from date of such publication, it will be permissible to include the work in a collected edition of my works by such publisher as I may select.

“ ‘ A. T. MAHAN.’ ”

“ We understand that the total length of the Recollections will be about 100,000 words, and the MS. will probably be completed by the end of the year. We should be very glad of any special suggestions which may occur to you regarding the announcements, if you find this convenient.

“ We are writing briefly now that the matter be definitely arranged, but we should like to express our high appreciation of an association which we shall use every means in our power to render perfectly satisfactory to you. We will forward the formal agreement shortly, and other details can be readily arranged a little later.

“ We are, with assurances of our regards,

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ HARPER & BROTHERS.”

In a letter to Sir Bouverie Clark, Mahan says of *From Sail to Steam* :

“ You will find in it little new. My aim was to be readable for the general public, and to a certain extent to contravene erroneous ideas about naval matters, which are more dangerous in our country than in yours; except when we have a man like Roosevelt, who really has sound military ideas. I have written purposely for the public, not for the profession; to amuse, and if possible make the book sell. I did not, and do not, fancy greatly writing about myself and hope I have minimised the ego. You will probably find in it simply a phase, in another service, of the experience and anecdotes you have known in your own.”

*Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812*, issued

in 1905, he personally considered his most thorough work from the point of view of history, and Admiral Caspar F. Goodrich wrote him this letter about it :

“ MY DEAR MAHAN,

“ I have read your last work, a history of the War of 1812, with an interest and a delight which make me your debtor for an intellectual enjoyment quite rare in my experience. In my judgment it is the best of all your writings, if one may be allowed to draw comparison. This is not surprising, for, after all, practice does make perfect. I should be the proudest of men if I had reached so high a plane of scholarship and analysis and could present the sequence of facts in so forceful and yet absorbing a way. As I cannot be proud of myself in this connection, I am immensely proud of you.

“ Mrs. Goodrich, who is here, joins me in love to yourself and Mrs. Mahan, and I am always,

“ Your sincere friend and admirer,

“ C. F. GOODRICH.”

A remarkable feature of the production of this book, and one which may carry a message of reassurance to present-day writers, was the period of nine years which elapsed between its conception and completion, and the fact that to a certain extent the subject had in the meantime lost its attractiveness. Mahan says of it :

“ Thus my orders to the *Chicago* led to dropping 1812, and to this my *Life of Nelson* was directly due. I had foreseen that the war of 1812, as a whole, must be flat in interest as well as laborious in execution ; and, upon the provocation of other duty, I readily turned from it in distaste. Nine years elapsed before I took it up ; and then rather under the compulsion of completing my Sea Power series, as first designed, than from any inclination to the theme. It occupied three years—usefully, I hope—and was published in 1905. Regarded as history, it is by far the most thorough work I have done. I went largely to original documents in Washington, Ottawa, and London, and I believe I have contri-

buted to the particular period something new in both material and interpretation. But, whatever value the book may possess to one already drawn to the subject, it is impossible to infuse charm where from the facts of the case it does not exist. As a Chinese portrait-painter is said to have remonstrated with a discontented patron, 'How can pretty face make, when pretty face no have got?'"

Not content with Government work and writing, Mahan devoted a considerable portion of his time to delivering lectures in Boston and elsewhere. In 1909 he published *The Harvest Within*, which is entirely devoted to consideration of the religious life. Without impartial analysis of the contents of this book, no full conception of Mahan's personality is possible. Just as his historical works and even his autobiography are entirely free from reference to his religious convictions, so *The Harvest Within* is detached from all incidents of his secular life, and deals solely with the spiritual side.

At the request of his London publishers, Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston & Co., who were engaged upon a voluminous *History of the Royal Navy*, then being edited by Sir William Laird Clowes, Mahan had contributed in 1898 that portion entitled *Major Operations, 1762-1783*, and in 1913 this was given to the public in book form, under the title *Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence*, published by Messrs. Little, Brown & Co., of Boston, who enjoy the distinction of having published the majority of Mahan's works in America and who undertook, on the strong recommendation of Professor Soley, to bring out *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, which, in common with the experience of many another epoch-making book, did not, as a commercial venture, appeal to the publishers, and was actually refused by at least one well-known house.

*The Interest of America in International Conditions* (1910), and a number of important lectures collected under the title of *Naval Strategy*, complete the number of Mahan's works. In a letter to a friend he admits that the collating and perfecting of the *Naval Strategy* lectures wearied him. He has this to say of it :

" I remember that in your letter you spoke hesitatingly about reading my *Naval Strategy*. I sincerely trust you have not felt that friendship required it. I will confess to you that the composing of it was the most perfunctory job I have ever done in book-writing. There were very compelling reasons for undertaking it, but it alone of all my much writing was felt to be a burden. It was conscientiously done, and I hope is not a bad piece of work, and I feel probably the last professional large work that I shall attempt. Enough commendation has reached me to make me hope that, with whatever faults, my reputation will not suffer seriously from it."

At any rate the French publishers thought well of it, and Little, Brown & Company, of Boston, wrote Mahan on February 6, 1914 :

" We have just received a letter from Ensign de Rivoyre, in which he states that the Paris publisher L. Fournier has decided to publish his translation of *Naval Strategy* on the terms quoted—\$50. Ensign Rivoyre wishes us to forward his thanks to you for the permission accorded him."

The lectures embodied in this volume formed part of the regular course of instruction at the Naval War College, and Mahan records that they were read either by himself or by another officer every year from 1887 to 1911. They enforced the lesson that war is an art, not a science. They expounded the history of naval strategy, the principles of which are unchanging, no matter to what extent tactics may be modified by modern invention, and they encouraged exhaustive

study of the past, without which no officer, however gifted, could hope to become an able commander. Napoleon backs the opinion that war is a business of positions. A somewhat humorous illustration of this occurs to me as I write. An impoverished and hungry bookworm, possessed of more knowledge of old editions than of scruples about other people's property, seized the psychological moment, when the presiding genius in the front of a book-shop was otherwise engaged, to take from the front of the shop a second-hand volume, of which copies were somewhat rare, sell it to its owner in the back of the shop, and get safely away with the proceeds. A faultless display of strategy and tactics, worthy of a better cause. The plan of campaign was carefully pre-arranged. What it of necessity lacked in hitting power—being an attack by a weak force upon one double its strength—it more than compensated for by the elements of surprise and cunning. The situation was gauged to a nicety. The opportunity was seized with courage and with the utmost dispatch. The outer defences were caught off their guard, valuable material was placed under contribution, and advantage was taken to slip through and attack in detail at the critical moment when the enemy forces were divided. The result was a conspicuous success.

The story is told that the naval authorities in Cape Town cabled to the British Admiralty to ascertain what books it would be best to buy for their new naval library. The reply came back, "Buy Mahan"; and in response to a further inquiry stating that the authorities had already bought a number of Mahan's books and asking what else to buy, they received a cable saying, "Buy more Mahan!"

During his thirty years of active literary work (with several intermissions at sea) Mahan produced twenty publications in book form, in respect of volume alone a monument to his remarkable industry from the forty-

third to the seventy-second years of his life. Of his contributions to the world's storehouse of knowledge, it was said by Professor William Milligan Sloane in a tribute to the Admiral, published in the *Columbia University Quarterly* of March 2, 1916:

“Unvarnished truth is the characteristic of Mahan's pages, the truth fairly stated and philosophically considered.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MARGIN OF NAVAL STRENGTH

"In a few years Mahan gave to the world that epochal book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, which stirred the nations of Europe to such a realisation of the significance of naval history, and such a comprehension of the efficiency of naval power, that they entered upon a determined competition for acquiring naval power, which continues to this day."—ADMIRAL BRADLEY A. FISKE, U.S. Navy.

IN war there is commonly one predominating factor, the existence of which, though possibly intangible and at the time unrecognised, yet controls the situation and ultimately forces a decision. This paramount influence has usually expressed itself in the military genius of one all-commanding mind.

Mahan has vividly portrayed the dramatic control which sea power exerted in overcoming the world-dominating ambitions of the greatest intellect which in modern times has mastered the secrets of the strategy of war, planned campaigns and led armies in the field.

Naval and military authorities recognize as the predominating influence in the great conflict of the twentieth century, *the margin of strength* enjoyed by the British fleet over that of Germany. For the existence of this margin of naval power at the critical stage, when war was forced upon humanity in 1914, Mahan was in no small measure responsible.

Napoleon said of Jomini: "Here is a young *chef de bataillon* who teaches us things which my professors never told me and which few generals understand.

# POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

If it is necessary for an inland telegram to be despatched, the telegram will be repeated for payment of half the amount of the inland telegram, any portion of 1d. over than 4d. being rounded up to 1s. and if it is found that there is any other charge, the amount of the charge will be added to the above.

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Handed in at the

Office at 12.45 p.m.

Received here at

TO

Bigelow London. 12 6  
Embassy - 10

Dear Sir,  
Thank you for kind letter  
just now not reading  
knowing makes best and  
trique to learn it  
first best it is a  
class work and classical

NOTE - This form must accompany any inquiry as to receiving this Telegram.

Handed in at the

Office at

Received here at

TO

Bigelow 1 2

Dear Sir,  
all points. It is  
on board all my ships  
and constantly quoted by my  
Captains and officers. I shall  
glad to see you at  
the Harbours and at that

NOTE - This form must accompany any inquiry as to receiving this Telegram.

Handed in at the

Office at

Received here at

TO

Bigelow 1 2

Spandau Harburg. William J. R.

EX-KAISER'S TELEGRAM TO MR. POULTNEY BIGELOW.



How could Fouché allow such a book to be printed ! This is giving away to the enemy my whole system of war ! ”

In his Sea Power books Mahan gave away to the enemy England's whole system of peace.

The first volumes of the series reached Germany in 1890 and 1892. The lessons they taught gradually influenced the German authorities from the Emperor downwards to concentrate their efforts in the creation of a huge navy. It was shortly after this that the German Emperor sent Mr. Poultney Bigelow the celebrated telegram which is reproduced in this chapter, and made his dramatic pronouncements : “ Our future lies upon the water,” “ the trident must be in our fist.”

Here is Mr. Poultney Bigelow's letter to Mahan :

“ 10, CHELSEA EMBANKMENT,

“ May 26, 1894.

“ MY DEAR CAPTAIN,

“ The quotation on the other side may interest you. It is included in a private telegram to me from the Emperor, in which he asks me to be his guest at the Imperial manoeuvres this autumn. Shall I not see you again ? Could you not come and spend a few days quietly here as my guest ? You need not be rushed !

“ I am faithfully,

“ POULTNEY BIGELOW.”

Extract from dispatch to Poultney Bigelow :

“ I am just now, not reading but devouring Captain Mahan's book ; and am trying to learn it by heart. It is a first-class work and classical in all points. It is on board all my ships and constantly quoted by my Captains and officers.

“ WILLIAM, I. AND R.

“ May 26, '94.”

In order to educate the people to the necessity for a powerful navy, the German Government ordered

Mahan's books to be translated into German and widely distributed throughout the Empire. Copies were supplied to all public libraries, schools, and Government institutions, and a complete set was placed on every German warship.

In *Sea Power and Freedom* Gerard Fiennes thus describes the effect of Mahan's teachings on the Emperor's mind :

" But in another direction, and that for the moment the most important of all, his influence was direct. Among the warmest admirers of his writings was the German Emperor, who found his vague aspirations crystallised on his pages. The opportunity to expand his realm on the continent was exhausted. Reflecting on all this, the teaching of Mahan came to him as a gospel newly revealed. Here was the new vision of world power, ever present to the mind of the imperial dreamer."

To the active promotion of this " trident " ambition the German naval expenditures afford eloquent testimony. These were :

1885 to 1894 . .	\$170,000,000 (£34,000,000)
1895 to 1904 . .	\$375,000,000 (£75,000,000)
1905 to 1914 . .	\$920,000,000 (£184,000,000)

The Naval Defence Act of 1900, championed by the Emperor himself, alone provided for the expenditure of \$370,000,000. The sensational development of the German Navy, however, may be attributed in large measure to the energies of Admiral von Tirpitz.

Admiral Bradley Fiske, one of the chief naval authorities of the United States, says in *The Navy as a Fighting Machine* :

" The effect of the acceptance of Mahan's doctrine was felt at once. Realising that the influence of sea power was a fact, and comprehending Great Britain's

secret, after Mahan had disclosed it, certain other great nations of the world, especially Germany, immediately started with confidence and vigor upon the increase of their own sea power, and pushed it to a degree before unparalleled; with a result that must have been amazing to the man who, more than any other, was responsible for it."

Careful examination of the works of distinguished writers on the subject leads irresistibly to the conclusion that Mahan's teachings were primarily responsible for the transformation which took place in the naval policy of Germany shortly after the publication of the *Sea Power* series.

How did the creation of the German Navy affect Great Britain? Here is Admiral Fiske's opinion:

"The rapid success of the Germans and Japanese, however, in building up their navies, as instanced by the evident efficiency of the German fleet almost under the nose of England and the triumph of the Japanese fleet in Tsushima Strait, startled the British Navy out of her conservatism, and caused her to proceed at full speed toward the modernisation of her strategy. With the quick decision followed by quick action that characterises the seaman everywhere, the British instituted a series of reforms, and prosecuted their efforts with such wisdom and such vigor, that, in the brief space of ten years, the British Navy had been almost revolutionised."

In a letter received by the author from Admiral Sims, and reproduced elsewhere, will be found this statement:

"The value of his studies was very naturally first appreciated in Great Britain, the country of all others most dependent upon maritime commerce; and all naval critics have testified to the influence of these studies in ensuring a renewal of a strong British naval policy."

Sir George Sydenham Clarke, now Lord Sydenham,

a recognised authority, expressed his views in these words :

“ In 1888 it was my privilege to be present at a lecture given to the officers studying at the Naval War College at Newport, R.I. The subject—the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea in their strategic relations to the United States—was treated with consummate ability. A new light seemed to be thrown upon the whole question of naval warfare ; confused pages of naval history took form and order ; great principles stood forth clearly revealed.

“ The lecturer was Captain Mahan, who was then preparing to write the books which have brought him well merited and lasting fame. The three volumes dealing with *The Influence of Sea Power on History* have themselves influenced history. The first appeared at a time when several writers were endeavouring by appeals to the past to awaken the British people to the facts that their ancient kingdom of the sea was in danger of being lost, and that the loss implied national extinction. The importance of the service thus opportunely rendered by the brilliant American writer can hardly be overrated.

“ His book was doubtless intended primarily as an address to his countrymen ; but the history of maritime war in the modern world is in the main the history of the Anglo-Saxon race, and to us in a special sense the *Influence of Sea Power* appealed. Speaking as an outsider, Captain Mahan wielded a force which could not have been exerted by any British writer, even if his equal had appeared among us, and others besides myself felt a sense of thankfulness that the stirring message had come from across the Atlantic.”

England can boast no more persistent advocate for a strong Navy than was Admiral Lord Beresford, who agitated unceasingly for over thirty years, and who wrote Mahan in 1890 a letter from which the following is an extract :

“ The book you have written has so interested and excited me I cannot resist writing to the author. If

I had the power I would order your books to be placed on the table of every house in Britain and her Colonies.

"If anything can wake our politicians up it will be a perusal of your book. I have written and begged some of the most prominent among them to read it not for my sake, but for my country's sake."

Sir John Laughton expressed the opinion that the Sea Power books would open the eyes of a number in England who were obstinately blind to many of the truths Mahan had so clearly demonstrated; and Sir Francis Jeune, the distinguished Judge, wrote Mahan in 1894 :

"It does seem a little late for us to realise what command of the sea really means, but it is nevertheless the fact that till you wrote we never did realise it."

Professor Tyndall said shortly before he died :

"If I get better I will write an article about this book. Every Englishman ought to read it, and to know how much we are indebted to this admirable American writer."

Lord de Saumarez, great-grandnephew of the famous Admiral of Nelson's day, recounts in a letter to Mahan in 1897 that a distinguished Admiral had expressed to him the opinion that Englishmen had not to thank either Conservatives or Liberals for the greatly improved position of the Navy. They had to thank Captain Mahan and no one else.

In an eulogy of Mahan shortly after his death, the United States Naval Institute, the literary voice of the Navy, recorded in its *Proceedings* :

"The regeneration of Great Britain's Navy which began in the nineties and was carried on under the Naval Defence Act of 1889 may be traced directly to Mahan's works. It has been said that the modern

British Navy is Mahan's creation, an hyperbole which contains far more than a grain of truth."

Admiral Higginson, who commanded the *Massachusetts* during the Spanish-American War, expressed in this letter the feelings of that section of the Navy which recognised Mahan's genius early in the day :

" RICHFIELD SPRINGS, N.Y.,  
" July 5, 1894.

" MY DEAR MAHAN,

" Allow me to add my mite to the chorus of praise which now greets you from the greatest men of a great nation. I will not say I 'told you so,' because even in my imagination I did not anticipate either the extent of appreciation or the wild enthusiasm with which England has received your works. But at the time of which I speak you were wearied with repetition and while you knew what you had written was good, and contained your best thought, you doubted that it would be appreciated and that the sale of your book would be confined to libraries and a few professional men.

" And now behold not only England but France and Germany at your feet and 'devouring' your words. Surely this ought to make you rejoice as it does your friends, and let me tell you (*entre nous*) that while professional thorns may annoy they cannot injure you, and I would not worry over them in the least.

" There is one thing, however, to be said about your works, and that is that they are two-edged, and while they show England what she ought to do they also show France what she ought not to do, and that may make the future contest more interesting. With your University honors you have raised the intellectual standard of our Navy and the service is deeply in your debt. It will probably never pay you, but the indebtedness will nevertheless remain for ever.

" Very truly yours,

" FRANCIS J. HIGGINSON.

" To Capt. Alfred T. Mahan,

" *Commanding U.S.S. Chicago.*"

The justification for the somewhat sombre prognostication in the concluding words of this letter, and the impression that Mahan's services to his country were but lightly appreciated by the people of his own land,<sup>1</sup> is reflected in the contents of the following communication received by Mrs. Mahan from the Navy Department shortly after the Admiral's death:

"NAVY YARD, NEW YORK,  
"PAYMASTER'S OFFICE,  
"December 19, 1914.

"MY DEAR MRS. MAHAN,

"I am in receipt of a letter from Admiral Goodrich, and as I do not know your address am sending this to him.

"Replying to some of the Admiral's questions I would advise you to communicate with the Navy Mutual Aid Association, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., and they will give you the necessary blanks with instructions for securing a pension. I would say that if the Admiral died from a cause that was incurred while he was on active duty, you will probably get a pension, whereas if the Admiral's death arose from some other cause not incident to the Service, you would have difficulty in obtaining a pension.

"If you will send back to me the check for \$373.60 I will remove the stamp, and you, as executrix, can then sign the check which should be signed A. T. Mahan, U.S.N., by 'your name,' Executrix. The reason for the cheque being \$373.60 was that the Admiral was in the hospital at Washington four days in November, so we had to deduct \$1.20 for that reason.

"We have remitted the Admiral's account to the Auditor for the Navy Department, and you should make

<sup>1</sup> "Admiral Mahan said in his book—and he was an American of whose knowledge and wisdom Congress seems to have known nothing and cared less—'Why do English innate political conceptions of popular representative government, of the balance of law and liberty, prevail in North America from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific? Because the command of the sea at the decisive era belonged to Great Britain.'"—OWEN WISTER, *A Straight Deal or The Ancient Grudge*.

claim on him for the balance that was due the Admiral on the date of his death, that is \$10.81.

"In concluding I wish to express my very deep sympathy with you in your bereavement, and if there is anything further that I can do in the way of assistance, please be free to call on me.

"Very sincerely,

"H. H. BALTHIS,

"*Paymaster, U.S. Navy, Paymaster of the Yard.*

"Mrs. A. T. Mahan,

"c/o Rear-Admiral C. F. Goodrich, U.S.N.,

"No. 1,700 Pine Street,  
Philadelphia, Pa."

The influence of Mahan's writings was also felt in those allied countries whose navies have contributed their glorious share in making possible the concentration of the main strength of the British Battle Fleet in the North Sea, which was the outstanding strategic feature of the late war. France in the Mediterranean, Italy in the Adriatic, Japan in the Pacific, Russia in the Baltic, all powerfully helped to keep the seas free of the German menace.

The unchanging fundamental principle of naval strategy in warfare is "concentration"—concentration of maximum efficients of gunfire, speed, and armour on the one spot which commands the movements of the most powerful units of the opposing fleet. There is little doubt that Mahan's insistent and outspoken advocacy of the principle of naval concentration and his unswerving opposition to any division of the units of the United States Battle Fleet influenced in no small degree the consummation of the arrangement between France and England which allowed of the withdrawal of the major portion of the British naval forces from the Mediterranean and their concentration in the North Sea.

It is almost impossible to realise at this day the extent of the influence of Mahan's writings on the minds of the men in whose hands lay the control of the destinies of nations a quarter of a century ago. More than one serious publication declared that statesmen slept with Mahan's books under their pillows. In the House of Commons a quotation from his writings was sufficient to close a discussion on a point of naval strategy. The most distinguished and experienced Admirals and administrators of the day sought his advice. In a letter quoted elsewhere, Colonel Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy and in close touch with many of the brightest minds in the country, in acknowledging receipt of some information from Mahan, says :

*"There is no question that you stand head and shoulders above the rest of us."*

Another distinguished writer said :

"Other nations have embraced with ardour Captain Mahan's conceptions, and the embrace has borne substantial fruit. In France, his classic work has had countless readers. Germany has swallowed it with equal alacrity. Japan has honoured it by an EDITION DE LUXE, and is introducing it into her schools. Even the frozen North has loosened her loins at the tap of Captain Mahan's wand, and it is not impossible to argue that Russia's appearance upon the ice-free waters of the Pacific is connected with his popular teaching upon sea power and its advantages. All these countries have spent vastly greater sums upon their navies since the appearance of these books, and some of them show every indication of a settled change in national policy."

Just before Mahan published *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, the Powers were spending \$190,000,000 (£38,000,000) on their navies in the course of twelve months. In the year before war broke out

they spent \$835,000,000 (£167,000,000). Here are the figures :

	1888-9		1913-14	
	\$	£	\$	£
Britain . .	65,000,000	13,000,000	230,000,000	46,000,000
United States .	20,000,000	4,000,000	145,000,000	29,000,000
Russia . .	20,000,000	4,000,000	120,000,000	24,000,000
Germany . .	10,000,000	2,000,000	115,000,000	23,000,000
France . .	40,000,000	8,000,000	95,000,000	19,000,000
Italy . .	25,000,000	5,000,000	50,000,000	10,000,000
Japan . .	5,000,000	1,000,000	50,000,000	10,000,000
Austria . .	5,000,000	1,000,000	30,000,000	6,000,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	190,000,000	38,000,000	835,000,000	167,000,000

No one would be so immoderate as to claim that Mahan was responsible for all this, but, to use a homely alliteration, the figures furnish food for reflection.

Mahan's writings abound in warnings to the British people to preserve the all-essential margin of naval strength for the safety of the Empire. The citation of evidences of the effect of his teachings might be multiplied indefinitely. His warnings are open to all the world to read. A couple of illustrations are here selected from the mass. In *Naval Strategy*, published in 1911, Mahan said :

"The power to control Germany does not exist in Europe, except in the British Navy ; and if social and political conditions in Great Britain develop as they now promise, the British Navy will probably decline in relative strength, so that it will not venture to withstand the German on any broad lines of policy, but only in the narrowest sense of immediate British interests."

A prophetic warning both for Britain and America is contained in these awe-inspiring words in *The Interest of America in International Conditions* (1910) :

"A German Navy supreme by the fall of Great Britain, with a supreme German Army able to spare

readily a large expeditionary force for over-sea operations, is one of the possibilities of the future."

Mahan's warnings touched British pride to the quick, and his philosophy of sea power put the subject of naval supremacy in a new light. Of this the powerful advocates of a Navy of predominating strength were quick to take advantage, and their efforts, slowly at first, but eventually with increasing momentum, resulted at last in that superb instrument of defence, each unit of which on August 4, 1914, on the cryptic signal consisting of the single word "Go," dashed off at full speed, and with hitherto undreamt-of dispatch took up its appointed place in that wondrous, restless, irresistible bulwark of safety which was to keep free from molestation the sunny coasts of Britain's gallant friend and ally.

In Democracy's darkest hour in August 1914 *the superiority of Britain's naval strength* kept the German fleet and the German transports off the seas, and thereby protected the northern and western coasts of France from invasion.

This enabled France to concentrate her forces just where they were most urgently required, on her north-eastern frontier.

The thoroughness with which the British Navy swept the seas clear of the enemy enabled England to fling together her first armies, and rush them safely over to France.<sup>1</sup>

These factors contributed to make possible the battle of the Marne.

The battle of the Marne saved France.

But for such irresistible, effective, and compelling

<sup>1</sup> Britain sent some 300,000 of the finest and best equipped troops in the world to help the French during those first three critical months of the war. Among innumerable other achievements, 3,000 of them on November 11, 1914, at Ypres, annihilated, within view, it is said, of the Emperor, 15,000 of the Prussian Guard, the flower of the German Army.

restraints as were imposed by the British naval forces, the enemy would doubtless have succeeded in carrying out his programme of ferocious destruction and plunder in France.

In this particular war-game the taking of the first trick—of which two cards were Paris and the Channel Ports—was the crucial and decisive operation of the entire forty years' prepared campaign. With these strategically precious and dominating possessions in such an enemy's grasp, before either England or America was ready to strike, the fate of Democracy—for generations at least—was sealed. But the British Navy, thank God, held the highest trumps.

Once more in Mahan's famous words, "Those far-distant, storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the dominion of the world."

Nor must the corollary of the battle of the Marne be overlooked in according to Mahan his full share in the glorious outcome of Democracy's mighty conflict.

The margin of strength of Britain's fleet made it possible for the French and "the contemptible little Army" <sup>1</sup> of Britain to save France at the Marne. But it did infinitely more than that. The far-reaching results of the battle of the Marne gave France and England TIME—then of supreme importance—to build up the matchless armies which have since covered themselves with glory on the western battlefields of fairest France. Moreover, by keeping the ocean routes open, the naval forces of Britain gave the United States, France, and Britain TIME to develop their resources, pull themselves together—in more senses than one—and thus qualify themselves for the great and final operations of the war. The British Navy taught the central military

<sup>1</sup> Eighty thousand men of the flower of the British Army for four days prevented some 300,000 German troops from rolling up the left wing of the Allied Armies.

Powers that the seas could be held long enough to enable Anglo-Saxondom to create armies larger and more powerful than their own, but it was the American Admiral, Alfred Thayer Mahan, who taught twentieth-century Britain the priceless lesson of the paramount necessity of *an adequate margin of naval strength*.

## CHAPTER XV

### “ FREEDOM OF THE SEAS ”

“ The reason why naval officers urge with heart and soul the retention of the old right of capture is because they know not how to make war without it, nor can any man tell them.”—JULIAN STAFFORD CORBETT.

DESPITE the fact that Germany has unconscionably violated the compact, the nations have agreed—subject to certain well-defined qualifications as to requisitions for military requirements by an officer in command of a district—to respect private property in occupied territory in time of war. The Hague War Regulations provide that neither requisitions in kind nor services can be demanded from communes or inhabitants except for the necessities of the army of occupation. On the high-seas, however, private property, by which is understood the merchandise which represents seaborne commerce in transit, whether carried in enemy or neutral ships, has been considered subject to capture if belonging to or destined for the enemy, provided a blockade of the enemy's ports is maintained; because, although the goods themselves are for the most part the property of individuals, the safe carriage and the ultimate disposal of them benefit the enemy nation. Consequently a nation with a large overseas commerce and an extensive merchant marine, but possessing a Navy weaker than that of its chief rival, naturally desires its merchandise and merchant ships, and the merchandise and ships of friendly and co-operative neutrals, to be immune from capture at sea in time of war. This would practically

do away with commercial blockades, except in so far as articles contraband of war are concerned, and is the interpretation which Germany, in support of her nefarious schemes for world domination, has sought to impose upon the catch-phrase, *Freedom of the Seas*.<sup>1</sup>

Between the first and second Hague Conferences Mahan was responsible for bringing about a change in the attitude of many minds as to the wisdom of the policy of advocating the immunity from capture of so-called private property at sea in time of war. He thereby did posterity a priceless service. For generations the United States had consistently favoured such a policy on the grounds of humanity. Some of the most eminent jurists of the day in both hemispheres, including such men as Lord Loreburn, Lord Chancellor of England, and the Hon. Joseph Choate, were in sympathy with the policy of immunity.

As a naval strategist, sensing the disastrous effects of such a policy, Mahan was diametrically opposed to it, and about eighteen months before the day approached for the United States delegates to the second Hague Conference to receive their instructions, he wrote the following letter to President Roosevelt, exposing from a military point of view the national danger of such a project :

“ DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

“ When at Oyster Bay I mentioned to you my wish to be free to write for publication concerning matters that might come before the approaching Hague Conference, notably the question of exemption from maritime capture of private property, so-called.

“ A very proper and necessary regulation of the Navy forbids officers discussing publicly matters of policy on which the Government is embarked. The question arises,

<sup>1</sup> By the courtesy of Mr. Charles Stewart Davison, extracts from an article published by him in the American press is reproduced in the appendix.

however, is the Hague Conference a body where measures are to be advocated as national policies? Or are they to be advanced for discussion, with a view to reaching improved conditions of the code common to all, which we call International Law?

"It is by no means necessary that any Government should formally announce either of the above as its own attitude; but should the second construction be adopted by our own, there could be no impropriety in a public officer contributing a properly worded argument on either side. Taking the particular measure I mention, our Government, I understand, has advanced it; but, in so doing, is it as a matter of national advantage so pronounced that opposition is improper, or is the matter one so far open to consideration that light may be welcomed whencever coming?

"It must be obvious to you that the present prepossession of the public mind in most countries is such that the question of war itself, and of questions incidental to war, are in danger of being misjudged and 'rushed.' One side only is clamorous. A special element of danger in this direction is the present British Government, with its huge heterogeneous majority to keep placated. With a Conservative Government there we might afford to be persistent in our old national policy, feeling safe that it would not be accepted, but would go over to another conference; with the present you will on military questions be playing with fire. But especially to be considered is the popular attitude in Germany toward the English-speaking communities, and the effect of the exemption of private property upon her ambitions at their expense. Maritime transportation, and commercial movement which is what so-called 'private property' really amounts to, is now one of her great interests, and is steadily growing. Great Britain, and the British Navy, lie right across Germany's carrying trade with the whole world. Exempt it, and you remove the strongest hook in the jaw of Germany that the English-speaking people have—a principal gage for peace.

"British interests are not American interests; no. But taking the constitution of the British Empire, and

the trade interests of the British Islands, the United States has certainty of a very high order that the British Empire will stand substantially on the same lines of world privileges as ourselves ; that its strength will be our strength, and the weakening it injury to us. Germany is inevitably ambitious of transmarine development. I don't grudge it her. As a proof, after the Spanish War I refused a suggestion to use my supposed influence against her acquisition of the Carolines, etc. ; but her ambitions threaten us as well as Great Britain, and I cannot but think that final action on the question of so-called private property at sea would be better deferred, and the question be thrown into the arena of discussion, that action when taken may be in full light. As yet the public has heard but one side. The instance I quoted before to you is in clear point. No doubt our Government a century ago would have signed away the right of commercial blockade, which so helped us in the Civil War.

"When to Germany are added the unsolved questions of the Pacific, it may be said truly that the political future is without form and void. Darkness is upon the face of the deep. We will have to walk very warily in matters affecting future ability to employ national force.

"With much respect,

"Sincerely yours,

"A. T. MAHAN."

The President's reply suggests a strong existing bias in high quarters towards immunity :

"WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON,

"December 29, 1904.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

"I am interested in your letter and the enclosure, and shall take them up with John Hay. You open a big subject for discussion. There is a strong tendency to protect private property and private life on sea and land. Of course, the earlier races killed or enslaved every private citizen of the hostile nation whom they could get at, and destroyed or took his property as a

matter of course. I shall have to think over the matter before I could answer you at all definitely on this proposition.

"Sincerely yours,

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

The matter evidently received authoritative consideration, for about seventeen months later Mr. Elihu Root, then Secretary of State, addressed this important communication on the subject to the Secretary of the Navy :

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON,

"May 21, 1906.

"The Honorable

"The Secretary of the Navy.

"SIR,

"I beg to enclose copy of a communication received from Captain A. T. Mahan upon the subject of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war, for the purpose of calling your especial attention to a suggestion made by him that the present policy of the United States in regard to that question should be made the subject of consideration by the General Board of the Navy.

"The policy of the United States has long been positive and outspoken in its advocacy of immunity. Conditions in this world are, however, continually changing, and this subject may have an important relation to the newly revived subject of general disarmament or limitation of armament. It is quite certain that the creation of an extensive commercial marine on the part of any great commercial country amounts now, in effect, to giving hostages for peace, and that the liability of private property to seizure in time of war insures a strong and powerful class in every commercial country deeply interested in the preservation of peace.

"There is undoubtedly a question whether decreasing the danger to commerce would not also greatly decrease the reasons for peace, and whether the establishment of immunity might not result in sacrificing human life in order to save merchandise. On the other hand, the necessity for protecting a merchant marine is undoubt-

edly an important consideration, leading to the enormous increase of naval armament now in progress.

"In my judgment, the whole subject should receive the most careful re-examination on the part of this Government before final instructions are given to our delegates to the second Hague Conference. As a foundation for such consideration, the views of the General Board of the Navy would be of great value, and I shall be very much obliged if you will be good enough to obtain them.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"ELIHU ROOT.

"Enclosure from Captain A. T. Mahan.

"April 20, 1906."

*"First Endorsement. D. L.*

"NAVY DEPARTMENT,

"May 23, 1906.

"State Department: Encloses copy of communication from Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S.N., upon the subject of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war; suggests that this matter be made the subject of consideration by the General Board of the Navy.

"Respectfully referred to the General Board for consideration and an expression of views as within requested by the Secretary of State.

"TRUMAN H. NEWBERRY,

"Acting Secretary."

*"Second Endorsement*

"GENERAL BOARD,

"June 23, 1906.

"State Department: Encloses copy of communication from Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S.N., upon the subject of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war; suggests that this matter be made the subject of consideration by the General Board of the Navy. —([L])—May 21, 1906.)

"Respectfully returned to the Department, through the Bureau of Navigation, accompanied by a letter (G.B.

No. 438) of this date, expressing the views of the General Board in compliance with the request of the Secretary of State.

"By direction of the General Board,

"SUMNER E. W. KITTELLE,

"*Lieut.-Commander U.S.N.,*

"*Secretary General Board.*"

The question was thus submitted for the consideration of the General Board of the Navy, of which Admiral George Dewey was President. The Board's report is too lengthy to be reproduced here, but in it they stated :

"The avowed policy of the United States has heretofore been in favor of immunity of private property from seizure at sea, but of late years this has been advocated from moral considerations, and the General Board fears that the military or practical considerations have not received the attention in framing the United States policy which they deserve.

"The modern tendency has been to limit more and more the acknowledged rights of belligerents, and the present necessity is to restrain this tendency within reasonable bounds or wars may become so ineffective as to lead to long-continued struggles which would be directly contrary to the intentions of the humanitarians. Captain Mahan clearly points out, in his letter forwarded by the Secretary of State, how the fear of capture of sea-borne commerce may prevent wars."

The following extracts from the Board's supplementary report to the Secretary of the Navy <sup>1</sup> contains the gist of their views and recommendations, in which it will be seen they unqualifiedly endorse Mahan in every particular :

"The relations of the United States with England have never been better than at the present time, and the relations between England and Germany are never good, so that in the event of war with Germany, it is not at all

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced by the courtesy of the Secretary of the Navy.

unlikely that the United States will be able to secure the passive friendship of England, and probably, if necessary, a treaty of mutual support and protection such as existed between Japan and England during the recent Japanese-Russian War.

"Germany will fear our interference with her merchant marine to some extent in case of a war with the United States single-handed, and of course if private property at sea is immune in time of war she need not fear it at all. But if the United States should secure Great Britain as an ally, Germany's shipping would be tied up no matter who Germany might secure as an ally, on account of the strategical position of England as regards German commerce, and on account of the large Navy of Great Britain.

"Should private property at sea be immune in time of war, this great advantage would be lost to Great Britain, as well as to the United States, and the immense assistance we might expect to receive from Great Britain would be tremendously decreased.

"Germany is desirous of extending her colonial possessions. Especially is it thought that she is desirous of obtaining a foothold in the Western Hemisphere, and many things indicate that she has her eyes on localities in the West Indies, on the shores of the Caribbean, and in parts of South America. It is believed in many quarters that she is planning to test the Monroe Doctrine by the annexation or by the establishment of a protectorate over a portion of South America, even going to the extent of war with the United States when her fleet is ready.

"It is asserted on good authority that Great Britain does not wish to acquire any additional colonial possessions. Should it be true that Germany wishes to extend her colonial possessions to the Western Hemisphere, our interests are here bound up with those of England, and we can reasonably expect passive, if not active, assistance from Great Britain should it become necessary for the United States to prevent German acquisition of territory in this hemisphere.

"The welfare of the United States and its immunity from entanglements with the other Powers is greatly

strengthened by strong ties of friendship and by unanimity of action with Great Britain. The two great English-speaking nations seem destined to exert a great influence on the conduct of war when war is inevitable. Nothing should be agreed to that will lessen that influence or, where our interests are in common, to take away so potent and influential a factor to prevent or shorten a war, as the liability to seizure of enemy's private property at sea in time of war."

Those Americans and Englishmen who in the old days advocated immunity, did so from the highest motive, namely that of humanity. Mahan and his brother-strategists were called upon to expose the delusive character of the arguments in favour of exempting such property from the chance of capture at sea. They further demonstrated the positive danger to the best interests of the United States which such immunity would entail.

An interesting sidelight is thrown upon the merits of the claims for immunity by the fact that in pressing the rights of the *individual* and enlarging upon the personal loss to which he was continually exposed by the possible capture of his merchandise, the existence of the safeguard of marine insurance by corporate or governmental instrumentality was apparently ignored. Another factor which was also seemingly overlooked was the influence for peace which is exerted by those numerous members of a community who stand to lose money by the seizure of their property, whether directly as merchants or indirectly as insurers, should war be declared.<sup>1</sup> The practical effect of making private

<sup>1</sup> "Maritime capture, on the other hand, in the words of Mr. Dana, 'takes no lives, sheds no blood, imperils no households, and deals only with the persons and property voluntarily embarked in the chances of war for the purposes of gain, and with the protection of insurance,' which by modern trading custom is invariably employed to protect the owner of property against maritime war risks, and which effects an immediate distribution of loss over a wide area.

property immune from seizure at sea would be the immediate extension of the contraband list to include every commodity of direct or indirect value to the enemy. This would be essential to the success of the operations of the Power or Powers desirous of establishing a blockade, which is a recognised and legitimate strategy of war. The immunity of innocent neutral ships and goods has been closely determined. Paper blockades are illegal and the rules regulating blockade have been strictly drawn. Mahan with unanswerable logic demonstrated that it was in accordance with the military policy of the United States to advocate an increase in the list of contraband goods, thus limiting further the rights of neutrals, and to resist any attempt to further limit the rights of blockaders.

In the collection of articles published in 1907 under the title of *Some Neglected Aspects of War*, Mahan has expressed his views on this subject in the chapter on *Belligerent Merchant Shipping*, and has also embodied in the book an article by the distinguished authority Sir Julian Corbett<sup>1</sup> on *The Capture of Private Property at Sea*. Both articles are highly interesting, and shed luminous rays of cold facts on this

Mild, however, as its operation upon the individual is, maritime capture is often an instrument of war of a much more efficient kind than requisitioning has ever shown itself to be. In deranging the common course of trade, in stopping raw material on its way to be manufactured, in arresting the importation of food and exportation of the produce of the country, it presses upon everybody sooner or later and more or less; and in rendering sailors prisoners of war it saps the offensive maritime strength of the weaker belligerent. In face of the results that maritime capture has often produced it is idle to pretend that it is not among the most formidable of belligerent weapons, and in face of obvious facts it is equally idle to deny that there is no weapon the use of which causes so little individual misery." —*Hall's International Law*.

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer in History to the Naval War College, and Director of Historical Section, Committee of Imperial Defence. Shares with Mahan the distinction of having been awarded the Chesney Gold Medal.

much misunderstood topic. Professor Corbett closes his enlightening disquisition with the words at the head of this chapter: "*The reason why naval officers urge with heart and soul the retention of the old right of capture is because they know not how to make war without it, nor can any man tell them.*"

The present-day importance of the subject is enhanced by the determination of the Allies to remove for ever from the seas the menace of unrestricted submarine piracy as practised by Germany in the late war. This doubtless is what is implied by the second of President Wilson's points essential to Peace: "Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants."

The author of the following breezy exposition of Sea Power in the *Brooklyn Eagle* of November 13, 1918, strikingly interprets Mahan's service to mankind:

"The phrase 'freedom of the seas' need give us no concern. Our Admiral Mahan explained our notion of the phrase in fifteen volumes. If he is not right, we are a long time coming to the point where we dispute him. Mahan was a voice crying in the wilderness when he exposed the German menace in 1910. Allan Westcott's recently published *Mahan on Naval Warfare* contains that prophetic exposure—from pages 38 to 46—in Mahan's *The Interest of America in International Conditions*.

"The earth is three-fourths sea. Mahan covered a subject second only to the stars. And when he died in 1914 he had only just started. Men of the sea have never tolerated pirates. They tend to honesty as the compass needle holds to the pole. They will grant no freedom to do wrong. We have been forced by the Germans to put billions into ships, and that fact has a further bearing on freedom of the seas. Mahan wrote: 'A broad basis of mercantile maritime interests and

shipping will doubtless conduce to naval efficiency by supplying a reserve of material and personnel.'

"Precisely what the psychology of Germany did not anticipate comes about. Germany has given us more seamen than we ever dreamed of having, and the more seamen there are, the more honor; the stricter the observance of law on the sea. The U-boat has crowded the sea with sailors. For one student of Mahan we now have a thousand. The Kaiser who told Mahan that he had 'devoured' his book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* took a meal his mind could not assimilate. And neither did we understand Mahan. We found his books dry and technical, and what happened at Trafalgar did not seem to us of any immediate interest. As late as 1916 we were saying that we were not concerned with the causes of this war, and a little later came another Trafalgar at Jutland. The British victory at Jutland saved the world. Our loss of Mahan, in December 1914, is comparable to the loss of Kitchener to our joint cause.

"Yesterday, in all the Episcopal churches the world over, sailors were held in special memory and special prayers were said for them. In the sermons the debt of mankind to sailors was acknowledged, and it is safe to say that in every sermon mention was made of the heroes who fought and died for us off Jutland on that memorable May 31, 1916. None of the low visibility clouded the conscience of the fighters, none palsied their good, strong arms.

"The women of Portsmouth wept and the whole world rejoiced. The strategy and technic of Trafalgar are a part of our most blessed heritage, for only by knowing how to fight and esteeming the worth of the fighting sailor can we understand, as all the people who travel the sea for a living understand, that sea power is vital to a progressive nation."

The effective blockade of the German ports by the British Fleet, the success of which Mahan did so much to ensure, saved the world, and thereby he did his countrymen an invaluable service, because but for that success-

ful blockade of the North Sea, Germany could have landed military forces in America and caused inconceivable devastation and misery ; moreover, America could not have safely sent a soldier, a bale of merchandise, or a letter to Europe, nor could she have made her ten thousand million dollars war profits, nor have had the use of the half-million tons of German shipping which the British cruisers bottled up in her ports. Without the British Navy, Democracy could not have won the war ; without the British Navy, Prussianism would have triumphed, and Liberty, as Anglo-Saxons comprehend it, would have perished from the face of the earth for generations to come.

Possibly it may be permissible at this opportunity to interpose a word about those associated with the enemy by ties of blood, some of whom may read these lines. In the last analysis, whatever the German people as a nation are at heart ; whatever they have been in the past ; whatever they may become in the future ; those among them who are humane, generous, upright, and God-fearing—and there must be many such—must recognise the one all-comprehensive fact that the atrocious infamies perpetrated by a large and representative section of their countrymen—infamies which have robbed the Turk of that sinister four-syllabled descriptive adjective with which his name has been for centuries associated—are responsible for the world's just condemnation and contempt. From this unhappily all Germans must suffer for generations to come, however innocent they themselves as individuals may have been, and the obvious task of all such good folk of Teutonic stock in the present and coming generations is to become so re-incarnated in thought, word, and deed as to divorce themselves and their descendants definitely and for all time from the minutest trace of that indelible stain which may be best described by the one word *Prussianism*.

Admiral Sims, the distinguished Commander-in-Chief

of the American Naval Forces in European Waters, adds to that of the military strategists his testimony as to the paramount influence of the British Navy. In his address to the visiting American journalists he said :

“ I would like American papers to pay particular attention to the fact that there are about five thousand anti-submarine craft in the ocean to-day, cutting out mines, escorting troopships, and making it possible for us to go ahead and win this war. The reason they can do this is because up in the North Sea somewhere lying at anchor is the great British Grand Fleet. They can do this work because the British Grand Fleet is so powerful that the German High Seas Fleet has to stay at home. If a catastrophe should happen to the British Grand Fleet there is no power on earth that can save us, for then the German High Seas Fleet can come out and sweep the seas. The British Grand Fleet is the foundation stone of the cause of the whole of the Allies.”

In 1918, when the man in the street was seeking a reliable definition of the term “ freedom of the sea,” Admiral Sims said : “ So far as history goes, the power of Great Britain has permitted practically absolute freedom of the seas to everybody, because any vessel could go to any British port and carry goods to any other port. To me, that looks like perfect freedom of the seas.”

Four years before war broke out, Admiral Mahan warned the British and American peoples of the danger of weakening the defensive power of the blockade. In a trenchant article on *Britain and the World's Peace* in the columns of the *London Daily Mail* he said :

“ There is little cause for wonder, then, that Germany is contracting debt in order to strengthen her Navy. The wonder is that intelligent men in Great Britain should be found to ignore these facts, and to advocate immunity from the incidence of war for sea-borne

commerce, under the delusive definition of 'private property.' " (*See Appendix.*)

Admiral Mahan divided honours with Lord Roberts in persistent and consistent advocacy of undeniably sound national measures which met with determined opposition from enlightened quarters. But whereas the failure to adopt Lord Roberts's proposals cost England countless lives and untold treasure, the failure of Mahan's opponents to introduce their suicidal innovation before hostilities opened in 1914 did much to save the world. *Blockade did more than bullets to win the war.*

In the light of the crowning justification of his contentions as exemplified in the actual experiences of the all-momentous contest between right and wrong now gloriously ended in the vindication of the right, it is almost pathetic to recall Mr. Andrew White's difficulties at the Hague in reconciling Mahan's views with those of the advocates of presenting the Central Empires with a trump card which would have furnished them with the means of evading the consequences of the blockade and possibly winning the war. The subject is of such momentous import that it may be considered permissible to here repeat the extract from Mr. White's autobiography reproduced in the chapter on the First Hague Conference.

"Then to the hotel and began work on the draft of a report, regarding the whole work of the conference, to the State Department. I was especially embarrassed by the fact that the wording of it must be suited to the scruples of my colleague Captain Mahan. He is a man of the highest character and of great ability, whom I respect and greatly like; but, as an old naval officer, wedded to the views generally entertained by older members of the Naval and Military Service, he has had very little, if any, sympathy with the main purposes of the conference, and he has not hesitated to declare his

disbelief in some of the measures which we were especially instructed to press. In his books he is on record against the immunity of private property at sea, and in drawing up our memorial to the conference regarding this latter matter, in making my speech with reference to it in the conference, and in preparing our report to the State Department, I have been embarrassed by this fact. It was important to have unanimity, and it could not be had, so far as he was concerned, without toning down the whole thing, and, indeed, leaving out much that, in my judgment, the documents emanating from us on the subject ought to contain. So now, in regard to arbitration, as well as the other measures finally adopted, his feelings must be considered. Still, his views have been an excellent tonic; they have effectively prevented any lapse into sentimentality. When he speaks, the millenium fades and this stern, severe, actual world appears."

Yet another side of this engrossing controversy presents itself in the consideration of the more than probable contingency that had the purposes of the blockade been frustrated by the adoption of the principle of immunity of private property at sea, friendly neutrals,<sup>1</sup> including the United States, would have continued to provide with the wherewithal to prolong, and possibly win, the war, those whom the world has learnt by bitter experience to recognise as the enemies of mankind. The thought is too hideous to contemplate. Thank God the practical knowledge, foresight, and courage of

<sup>1</sup> Should future international law or the League of Nations fail to eliminate from the political horizon the so-called "neutral" of the past, measures will be necessary to obviate in future any such cruel injury as that from which the Allies suffered in the late conflict, by reason of the wholesale and gigantic abuse of neutral privileges on the part of those countries contiguous and semi-contiguous to Germany, through the instrumentality of other neutrals who in the first year of the war poured their foodstuffs and merchandise into these countries for the benefit of the enemy either directly or by means of subtle substitution, and would have continued to do so but for the effective commercial blockade maintained by the British Fleet.—C. C. T.

Admiral Mahan were instrumental in helping materially to avert so appalling a calamity.

In the last analysis Mahan and his teachings probably did more than any other one factor to right the greatest wrong in history and to start the joy-bells ringing in every Anglo-Saxon heart.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THEN AND NOW

"A Navy, therefore, whose primary sphere of action is war, is, in the last analysis and from the least misleading point of view, a political factor of the utmost importance in international affairs, one more often deterrent than irritant.

"It is in that light, according to the conditions of the age and of the nation, that it asks and deserves the appreciation of the State, and that it should be developed in proportion to the reasonable possibilities of the political future."—A. T. MAHAN, *The Future in Relation to American Naval Power*, 1895.

IN these days of thousand million dollar naval appropriations it is hardly possible to conceive of the indifference with which the Navy was regarded by the American people up to about the time when Mahan first came into public notice as an author in 1883. This date coincides with the birth of what was then known as the New Navy, which occurred in President Arthur's administration under the vigorous policies of Secretary Hunt and Secretary Chandler. Mahan's influence was not to be actively felt in the United States until some ten years after this.

So great was the difficulty of getting Congress to vote for even one battleship of the second class in the early days, that the wits of the Navy used to illustrate the situation by the story of the old lady who, on being told that the honey she was enjoying was from her host's garden, said, "I think I'll get a bee for my garden too."

The following letter to Mahan from Admiral Stockton reflects the views of intelligent naval men of the day:

"MARE ISLAND, CAL.,

"June 30, 1890.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN,

"I have just finished reading your book and cannot refrain from writing to you to congratulate you

upon its value and success. As I had not the good fortune to hear your lectures it was not in any way a 'twice-told tale' to me, and I found it most interesting and valuable. I was at first disposed to doubt the advisability of pointing the moral by referring to our conditions, our uncertain and erroneous policies, and want of strength; but I finally concluded that, in and out of season, it is advisable and even a solemn professional and patriotic duty to call attention to the lamentable state of affairs and the ostrichlike conduct of those who legislate for us.

"With kindest regards to Mrs. Mahan, I am,

"Sincerely yours,

"CHARLES H. STOCKTON."

The *Chicago*, which Mahan commanded from 1893 to 1895 and which was at that time considered the most powerful ship in the United States Navy, was finished in 1887, and with two other unarmoured cruisers, the *Atlanta* and the *Boston*, constituted at that time the Navy's effective unit of modern warships. Then followed slowly the construction of a few additional ships, until in 1890, the year in which *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* appeared, came the dawn of a new era, and the first serious step was taken in the direction of building a Navy worthy of the United States. This was during President Harrison's administration and was in great measure due to the initiative of Secretary Tracy. Soon after this Mahan may be said to have begun to influence professional opinion. The far-reaching stimulus created by his unique reception in England, which made the name of Mahan a household word in all maritime countries and greatly enhanced the prestige of the American Navy, was further intensified by the lessons learnt in the Spanish-American war and brought about a change in public sentiment towards the Navy. The naval victories at Manila and Santiago further contributed to influence legislators favourably in the direction of navy building.

The result was that by 1903, some ten years after the earliest date at which the teachings of Mahan's first sea-power books began to take effect in America, the United States Navy boasted, in commission and under construction, twenty-four first-class battleships and ten armoured cruisers.

From this time on the growth of the Battle Fleet was steady and continuous, usually two first-class ships being added every year. Then came the Great War, and the supreme importance of sea power, as illustrated by the predominant control exercised by the British naval forces, resulted in 1916 in the authorisation by Congress of a naval programme absolutely without parallel in history. This was further supplemented by the provisions of another Act in March 1917.

Political considerations do not yet allow of a detailed and comprehensive account of the present and imminent strength of the American Navy; but when peace conditions are finally established and all restrictions are removed, the author anticipates the crowning pleasure of offering his readers a recital that will raise a tumult of emotion and patriotic pride in every American heart. It is, however, permissible to condense into a fairly palatable capsule this much of the information which is already available abroad. The 1916 Act appropriated three hundred million dollars to cover the expenditures of the first year of a three-years programme, which included, among a number of other craft, ten battle-cruisers and ten battleships. Four of the battleships were to be of 32,600 tons, with a speed of 21 knots and carrying eight 16-inch guns; six battleships were to be of 40,000 tons with a speed of 25 knots and carrying twelve 16-inch guns; and six battle-cruisers of 34,800 tons with a speed of 35 knots and carrying ten 14-inch guns. The battleships were to cost some \$20,000,000 each, and the battle-cruisers were to be 850 feet in length,

200,000 horse-power, and cost \$21,000,000 each.<sup>1</sup> The Act of March 4, 1917, authorised a further appropriation of five hundred million dollars.<sup>2</sup> More than this cannot here be said about the American Navy, except that, as all the world knows, the United States now have in commission a squadron of ships of the *Pennsylvania* class, each equipped with a dozen 14-inch arguments for democracy, and Uncle Sam's resources for accumulating convincing logic of this character are practically inexhaustible. The accompanying illustration of the powerful ships of this class gives an idea of their stately and graceful lines suggesting those of the destroyer type.<sup>3</sup>

The destructive power of the modern Dreadnought is such that no comparison is possible between the strength of the present United States Navy and that of Mahan's day, as represented by a few ships of the *Chicago* class. As regards comparative rank, the American Navy in those regrettable days had, internationally speaking, no standing; to-day she is fast approaching second place among the great navies of the world.<sup>4</sup>

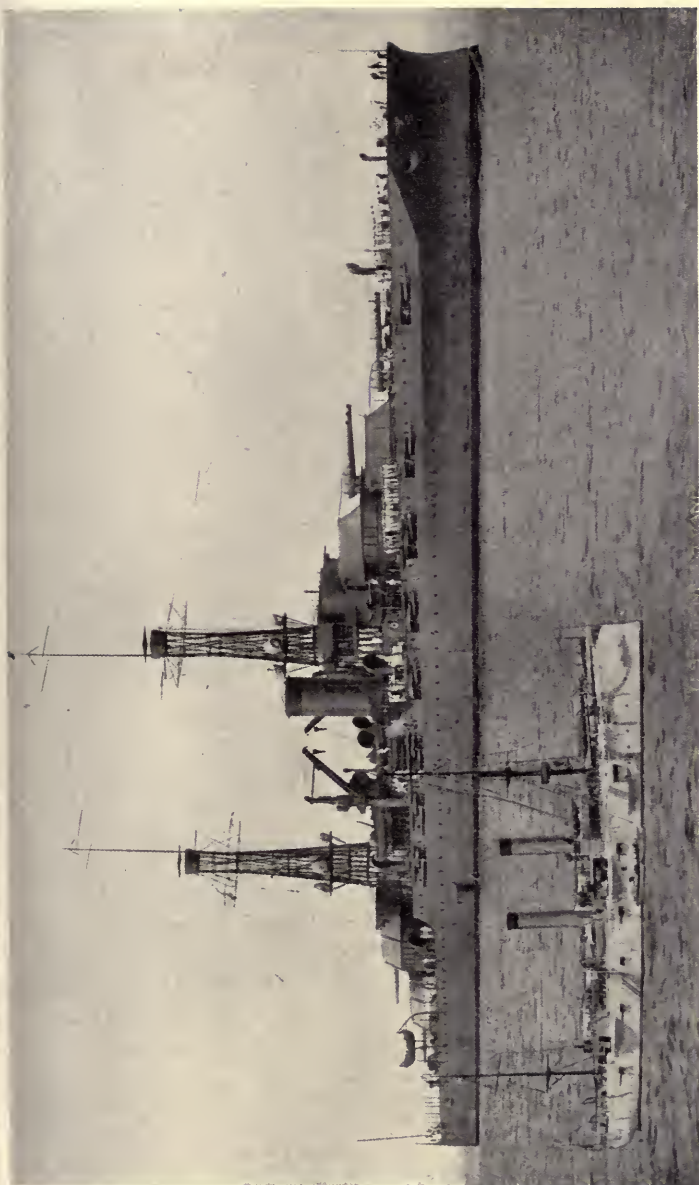
An illustration of the comparative sizes of individual representative ships of that period and of the present day is shown in the accompanying picture of the *Chicago*

<sup>1</sup> A 16-inch naval gun will accurately throw a projectile weighing a ton about fifteen miles. The ships of the *Queen Elizabeth* class of the British Navy are of 27,500 tons, 650 feet in length, carry eight 15-inch guns, and steam about twenty-five knots. The battle-cruisers of the *Lion* class are of 26,000 tons, 675 feet in length, carry eight 13.5-inch guns, and steam about thirty knots.

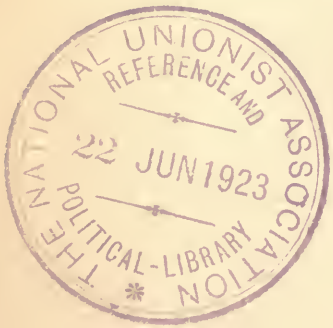
<sup>2</sup> For war purposes the Naval Budget subsequently exceeded a thousand million dollars.

<sup>3</sup> In Jane's *Fighting Ships*, 1919, it is stated that *New Mexico*, *Idaho*, and *Mississippi* are improvements upon *Pennsylvania* and *Arizona*, which, "taken all round, represent one of the most successful, if not the most successful, of all Dreadnought designs up to the present time."

<sup>4</sup> Written before the surrender of the German Fleet. American Navy now stands second.



U.S.S. PENNSYLVANIA AND U.S.S. CHICAGO.



and the *Pennsylvania* photographed together on the same sheet.

Of all Mahan's innumerable exhortations to his countrymen demonstrating the vital necessity of a strong Navy, none perhaps had greater potency than that in which he defined in the following words that policy which is so dear to the heart of every American, and is known as the Monroe Doctrine : "*Reduced to its barest statement, and stripped of all deductions, natural or forced, the Monroe Doctrine, if it were not a mere political abstraction, formulated an idea to which in the last resort effect could be given only through the instrumentality of a Navy.*"

Mahan's efforts for many years were exerted in the direction of awakening public opinion in America to the importance of a Navy in keeping with the national responsibilities of the United States. Some of his articles on the subject are contained in a volume published in 1897 under the title of *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*; but his writings for thirty years contained innumerable lessons, presented as never before by human ingenuity, and vividly illustrating the imperative demand for a strong and active fleet in the national interest and for the security and welfare of the people of the United States.

Although his success unfortunately gave rise to jealousy in some quarters, there is ample evidence that many naval officers of the most thoughtful and efficient type thoroughly appreciated his efforts to secure for his country a Navy and a Navy Department in every way worthy of the United States. This letter from Admiral Bowman Hendry McCalla is characteristic of a number of similar tributes to Mahan's invaluable services in this all-important direction :

"DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

"Ever since your work upon *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*

was published I have anticipated reading, with great pleasure and instruction, the work which I knew you intended to publish eventually, bringing the influence of Sea Power up to and including the War of 1812.

“I am just now in the first volume of *The Influence of Sea Power upon the War of 1812*, and I feel it to be a privilege to have the opportunity to express to you the great satisfaction and pleasure with which I am becoming familiar with the actual conditions which prevailed in both countries prior to the declaration of our last war with England. I will not take any of your time beyond asking you to accept my congratulations upon the wonderful insight you have given to those who are interested in naval matters of the enormous influence which fleets have exerted upon the rise and fall of nations.

“If our people, our legislators, and our officers show by their efforts in future their appreciation of your inspired works, they will so modify the organisation of the Navy Department, the administration of the Navy, and method of promotion as to make our Service equal to the most efficient among maritime nations. We may then feel, I think, that our Navy will have been responsible, through your teaching, in creating a real Fleet, which may be expected to be at least equal in efficiency to those of other nations.

“May I ask you to do me the favor to convey to Mrs. Mahan our very great pleasure at the well-deserved and immortal reputation which her husband has gained for his family and our Navy?

“Very sincerely,  
“B. H. McCalla.”

In practice as in precept he was equally persistent, and it is interesting to trace the several links in the chain of official occurrences which eventually led to the adoption of a strong naval policy by the United States Government.

When he was ordered to sea in 1893 he warmly recom-

mended as his successor in the Presidency of the Naval War College his colleague and friend, Captain H. C. Taylor. Mr. Herbert, Secretary of the Navy, approved of Mahan's choice and duly appointed Captain Taylor President of the College.

In those days there was no General Board of the Navy, and its establishment was primarily due to Mahan's influence with Taylor, who induced the then Secretary of the Navy to approve of the plan and also persuaded Admiral Dewey to accept the first Presidency of the Board. The modern Navy of the United States owes its character largely to the expert knowledge of the members of the General Board, among whom at that time were Rear-Admirals George A. Converse, Charles S. Sperry, William Swift, Seaton Schroeder, William T. Swinburne, Richard Wainwright, and Captain Sumner Kittelle.

At a hearing before the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives in February 1916, Rear-Admiral Cameron McRae Winslow, then Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, gave the following evidence :

" I can give you the history of the General Board, and I am inclined to think that I am the only officer in the Navy who can give to you what produced the General Board and its development. Many years ago, when Admiral Dewey came home from Manila, he came home with very high rank. It was a problem in the Navy Department just where Admiral Dewey would fit in. It was quite a serious problem. Admiral H. C. Taylor, who was probably one of the most far-seeing men that we had at the time in the Navy or that we have at the present time, was very closely associated with Admiral Mahan. They were deep thinkers, and they realised what must come if we were to have a Navy. Admiral Taylor was very close to the Secretary of the Navy at the time, and the Secretary of the Navy had great confidence in him.

“ In talking this thing over, Admiral Taylor saw that there was an opportunity to make a start on a different organisation in the Navy Department, and he advocated the formation of a General Board with Admiral Dewey at the head of it, provided it would be satisfactory to Admiral Dewey, which it was. I think it would have been almost impossible to have formed the General Board at that time if the situation had not been such as it was, because the General Board was bitterly opposed, as it was after it was formed. It was bound to continue on with Admiral Dewey at the head, but the General Board was not then, nor has it been since, what Admiral Taylor hoped would be the final development. What he wanted was a General Staff, and that is what I have always thought was the best. My opinion, of course, is not of great consequence, but that was the opinion of Admiral Mahan and Admiral Taylor, and it was the opinion of everybody who has made a study of how to control a great military body, realising that you can get higher efficiency and better results by having it controlled by a General Staff, but we have not gone to that extent. The General Board, mind you, is not a General Staff, but it has become so important in the Navy Department that it would not be done away with, the Secretary would not like to do without it, and I doubt if any Member of Congress would like to do without the General Board.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus Mahan's influence can be traced through his volumes of earnest admonition and throughout the various evolutions which eventually produced the present American Battle Fleet, and the following letter from Admiral Sims, one of America's foremost naval commanders, adds authoritative evidence of Mahan's far-reaching inspiration in the creation of the national sentiment which has been so largely responsible for the

<sup>1</sup> In *The Navy as a Fighting Machine* Admiral Fiske says that Congress has so enlarged the scope of the office of Chief of Naval Operations as to make it a General Staff.

eminent position the United States is rapidly assuming in international naval affairs :

“ U.S. NAVAL FORCES OPERATING IN EUROPEAN WATERS,

“ U.S.S. ‘ MELVILLE,’ FLAGSHIP.

30, GROSVENOR GARDENS,

“ LONDON, S.W.1.,

“ May 2, 1918.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I am very glad to learn from your letter of March 28, 1918, that you are writing a biography of the late Admiral Mahan. I think it specially fortunate that this is being done at this particular time by an official of the British Government, when the British and American Navies are so closely associated in this great war for Democracy, for in a very real sense the Admiral's life-work very intimately concerns not only Great Britain but the United States, and every seaman, every statesman, and every citizen of those countries whose national policies depend for their realisation upon the free and peaceful use of the sea.

“ During the past twenty years I have been in frequent association with many officers of the principal navies of the world, and with the statesmen of these nations, their leading naval advisers, and their national authorities in the various branches of naval warfare. Almost without exception, these men have referred to the great influence of Mahan's works in making clear the vital importance of sea power in safeguarding the sovereignty and independence of nations. I know of no other similar influence upon governmental policy that is so universally acknowledged.

“ At the time when Admiral Mahan began his writings at the United States Naval War College, the art of naval warfare was in a state of development corresponding approximately to that of land warfare previous to the advent of Napoleon. After Waterloo there followed a long period of analytical study, which led to the modern conceptions of land warfare and of the function of armies in the life and development of nations.

“ Strange to say, the true cause of Napoleon's downfall—the comparatively inconspicuous pressure of sea power—was overlooked. It is even doubtful whether

the navy which exerted this pressure clearly comprehended the vital significance of its influence until Mahan's analytical genius made it clear to all the world. He demonstrated also the similar influence of sea power upon the outcome of many of the great wars, including the American Civil War.

"The value of his studies was, very naturally, first appreciated in Great Britain, the country of all others most dependent upon maritime commerce; and all naval critics have testified to the influence of these studies in ensuring a renewal of a strong British naval policy.

"Similarly the United States was also awakened and began building up its Navy, which had fallen to a low ebb. Fortunate indeed was this renewal of naval policy—this adequate strengthening of our sea forces—as illustrated perhaps more strikingly than ever before by the events of this great war.

"We have seen the Navies of the Allies standing between German domination and the freedom of the world, and we realise how much Great Britain, the United States, and all of humanity owe to the wisdom of Mahan—the pioneer thinker in demonstrating the vital relation between sea power and national life.

"His loss is keenly felt in the naval world, and by many illustrious men in all countries. Very often have I heard sincere regret expressed that he could not have lived to witness the most impressive illustration of the principles which he so convincingly demonstrated, and that we should have been deprived during these critical times of the benefit of his unrivalled knowledge of naval warfare and his great powers of analytical reasoning.

"Very sincerely yours,

"WM. S. SIMS.

"To Carlisle Taylor, Esq.,

"British Vice Consul,

"New York, U.S.A."

Incidentally the fact that Admiral Sims was born under the British flag, and that his mother was British, her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sowden, the Admiral's grandfather and grandmother, being both English, may be



REAR-ADMIRAL WILLIAM SOWDEN SIMS, U.S.N.



said to contribute a naval link to the chain of close Anglo-American relations which Mahan was so desirous to promote.

No man understood and appreciated Mahan more thoroughly than Theodore Roosevelt, who has left this on record :

“ In dealing with our naval officers, in working for the Navy from within the Navy, Mahan was merely one among a number of first-class men ; and many of these first-class men were better than he was in the practical handling of the huge and complicated instruments of modern war. But in the vitally important task of convincing the masters of all of us—the people as a whole—of the importance of a true understanding of naval needs, Mahan stood alone. There was no one else in his class, or anywhere near it.”

It would be impossible to estimate how large a part Mahan played, directly and indirectly, in the creation of the great fleet which now upholds the honour and dignity of the American people.

## CHAPTER XVII

### PEACE VIEWS

"The power to control Germany does not exist in Europe, except in the British Navy."—A. T. MAHAN.

"It is as fallacious and dangerous to rely wholly upon courage, devotion, and resources of the people, without practical preparation, as it is futile to depend upon isolated position or arbitration to forever protect us from war."—COLONEL JAMES G. HARBORD, United States Army.

IN the preface to the collection of articles published in book form in 1912, under the title of *Armaments and Arbitration, or the Place of Force in the International Relations of States*, Mahan explains that :

"The first six were planned as a series, intended to present the arguments, too frequently ignored, that neither Arbitration in a general sense, nor Arbitration in the more specific form of judicial decision based upon a code of law, can always take the place, either practically or beneficially, of the processes and results obtained by the free play of natural forces. Of these forces national efficiency is a chief element, and armament, being the representation of the national strength, is the exponent."

The chief significance of this statement lies in the word *always* ; Mahan's view being that while most international differences can and should be adjudicated by arbitration, there are conditions of political security and principles of national honour, determined violation of which by another Government can be settled by force alone, or at best by the threat of the employment of

adequate force. Unhappily recent historical events support this view, for it is now evident to all mankind that absolutely nothing but force could have prevented the plunder of the civilised world by the Central Powers.

Mahan made it clear that in the arbitration treaties into which the United States has entered, the decision as to *justiciable* or *non-justiciable* issues rests with the Government of the day. The lesson he sought to teach was, briefly, that nations should be prepared for defence according to the reasonable requirements of their respective territories. No nation should arm for offence. Neither disarmament nor lack of preparation necessarily prevents war; otherwise the American Civil War would not have taken place. There are in history instances of wars that have resulted in just and beneficial conclusions which would not have been attained had the issues been submitted to arbitration on purely legal grounds, apart from considerations of national honour, and the civil and political liberties of the individual. As illustrations of these he mentions the Spanish-American War and the Boer War. He also quotes the Monroe Doctrine as a political contention having no support in international law. Can anyone picture the United States submitting to arbitration a question involving the principles of the Monroe Doctrine?

In an article under the title *Why not Disarm?* Mahan enlarges on this subject, and summarises his message to the people of the United States in these words:

“Our Monroe Doctrine imposes a veto upon interposition by non-American States. Arbitration cannot uphold the Doctrine because it has no legal status. Armament alone can sustain, and to be bloodless it must be efficient ‘that the opposed may beware of thee.’”

Here is a letter, one sentence of which suggests in a nutshell the underlying truth which, in the absence of an international court of arbitration sufficiently powerful

to enforce its decrees, made the Spanish-American War inevitable :

“NAVY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON,  
“*March 21, 1898.*

“MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

“There is no question that you stand head and shoulders above the rest of us ! You have given us just the suggestions we want. I am going to show your letter to the Secretary first, and then get some members of the Board to go over it.

“Personally, I can hardly see how we can avoid intervening in Cuba if we are to retain our self-respect as a nation.

“You probably don't know how much your letter has really helped me clearly to formulate certain things which I had only vaguely in mind. I think I have studied your books to pretty good purpose. If I can get the Secretary to enunciate just the policy about promotions which you advocate, I am sure it will help us more than anything else.

“Faithfully yours,

“THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

“*P.S.*—There are mines off Fort Monroe, and in the fort three modern 10-inch rifles, and a number of good mortars. These, with a couple of small harbor torpedo-boats, would I think be enough to prevent a raid on Hampton Roads by a hostile fleet.

“Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S.N.,

“160, West 86th Street,

“New York.”

Our self-respect as a nation ! What judicial body can arbitrate on that ? But might not the cause of the offence in most cases be removed by combined international pressure ?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A future contingency which the League of Nations must take into account is reflected in the fact that in the international complications arising out of the Spanish-American War, Britain, as on similar occasions in days gone by, sided with the United States against the principal European Powers.—C. C. T.

Mahan loved his country, and as a strategist of profound historical insight he advocated an American Navy strong enough to meet successfully all contingencies the future might present. Yet he was by nature undoubtedly a man of peace. His views on armament and arbitration were based on a knowledge of human nature. He felt that a sufficient change in man's attitude towards his moral obligations would prevent war. He expressed his feelings in these words :

“ I feel with full intensity of personal conviction that when moral motives come to weigh heavier with mankind than material desires, there will be no war, and coincidentally therewith better provision of reasonable bodily necessities to all men.”

As such a change in human nature unfortunately cannot be relied on, Mahan, if he were here, would now doubtless agree with the majority of eminent strategists throughout the world, that peace can be best assured by some sort of agreement under which the Navies of Great Britain and the United States would co-operate to close the seas instantly to any nations resorting to arms without having first exhausted every means of a settlement by international arbitration. If a League of Nations can be organised to ensure this more effectually, all the better ; but all Mahan's teachings demand that America and Britain must ultimately stand together as the imperative and essential and indispensable foundation of any plan for the effective preservation of peace<sup>1</sup> throughout the world in the years to come.

Some two thousand years ago Marcus Aurelius said :

“ Wouldst thou confer upon any country the clouds of war—induce its government to disarm.”

Twenty centuries later, in a speech in A.D. 1895, Mahan said :

“ In maintaining the strength of the British Navy, I

<sup>1</sup> In the unromantic but significant words *raw materials* reposes the secret of one of the most potential levers for the maintenance of peace.

consider, lies one of the best hopes for the peace of the world."

Twenty-three years after this, on the anniversary of the arrival of the first United States warships in British waters, Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, Commander-in-Chief of the British naval forces on the Irish coast, concluded his address to the American destroyer flotilla with these words :

"To command you is an honour, to work with you is a pleasure, to know you is to know the best traits of the Anglo-Saxon race."

Mahan's conception of the preservation of universal peace was united action on the part of all that is represented and implied by the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack on the high-seas, and to that end he consistently urged adequate naval strength for America as well as Britain and enlightenment of the masses in both countries to bring about such union, not through the instrumentality of statesmen, but as a yielding to irresistible popular impulse.

Mahan did not disguise his feeling of apprehension lest in far-off days to come the subsidence of the military spirit in the civilised nations of the West, and the consequent loss of those lessons of obedience and respect for authority and law and order which military training imposes upon the youth of each succeeding generation, should contribute to pave the way for the development of the yellow peril. Although a strong advocate for universal peace, he warned posterity that it is not to be ensured by the representatives of Western civilisation dropping their arms, relaxing the tension of their moral muscle, and through ease and material prosperity becoming "fatted cattle fit only for slaughter."

"Whate'er betide," he adds, "sea power will play, in those days, the leading part which it has in all history, and the United States by her geographical position must

be one of the frontiers from which, as from a base of operations, the sea power of the civilised world will energise."

As the great exponent of Sea Power, Mahan contributed more than any other factor to make possible the glorious peace which naval strength has done so much to win, and which Sea Power will continue to preserve as the paramount essential to the welfare and happiness of the human race.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### TWO ADMIRALS

"Friendship is seldom lasting but between equals, or where the superiority on one side is reduced by some equivalent advantage on the other."—DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

OWING chiefly to his natural reserve, Mahan's circle of intimate friends was small. In *From Sail to Steam* he acknowledged that while he experienced no difficulty in entering into civil conversation with a stranger who addressed him, he rarely took the first step, preferring an introduction. He also admitted to an abhorrence of public speaking, and a desire, amounting to a mania, to slip unobserved into a back seat wherever he went. In view of the proverbial sociability of the Irish race, his personal conclusions are of interest. He says: "But I am bound to admit I get both these dispositions from my father, whose Irishry was undiluted by foreign admixture. I have none of the gregariousness of the French or Irish."

Such tendencies do not make for a large personal acquaintance. Had he been of the pushing, aggressive, advertising type, Mahan could no doubt have made himself one of the most widely known Americans of his day and generation. Despite his innate modesty and retiring nature, however, he earned for himself an exalted place among the most eminent men the United States have so far produced.

His European experiences apparently had a broadening effect, for he writes to his family:

"The mixing easily with strangers is sometimes

natural gift, but when it is otherwise, custom soon rubs off natural shyness. There are few men naturally more retiring than myself, yet this cruise has resulted in making me perfectly at ease in all companies and all places, except when making a speech, and even that is getting easier."

One of the distinguished naval officers who best knew him and understood him was Vice-Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark of the British Navy. Owing to their migratory existence, it is inevitable that the friendships of naval men should often be kept alive by correspondence. That between Bouverie Clark and Mahan was no exception to the rule. An outline of the lifelong friendship of these two Admirals is contained in a letter from Sir Bouverie Clark to the author. Here it is :

"I have to thank you for your letter of March 20, telling me you have undertaken the task of writing a biography of Admiral Mahan, and asking me for a letter giving my recollections of him as a friend. This I find a little difficulty in doing, as our friendship consisted of two phases with a considerable gap between them, and during the latter stage was mainly on paper.

"When I first met Mahan in 1884, on the Pacific Station, he was in command of the U.S. corvette *Wachusett*, and I commanded H.M. ship *Sappho*. We met several times at various Chilian and Peruvian ports, and after exchanging the usual official visits, we soon became very friendly, although, as you say, he was a reserved man. During our conversations we found many subjects of mutual interest, and I was strongly attracted towards him, and formed a very high opinion of his sound common sense in all matters that we ever discussed together, and the longer I knew him the more I admired him.

"Towards the end of 1884 I returned to England on promotion to Captain, and our brief but lasting friendship came temporarily to an end. During the next ten years I was serving afloat almost continuously. But in 1895, when his books on 'Sea Power' were published, I

could not refrain from writing to him to tell him with what cordial appreciation they had been received in naval circles on this side. From that time I continued a desultory correspondence with him up to the time of his last illness, and I saw him on each of his rare visits to this country, if I happened to be in England myself, and in 1894 he paid me a short visit at the Royal Naval Barracks at Devonport, where I was then in command. After that I was appointed 'Director of Transports' at the Admiralty, and during the South African War of 1899 to 1902 I was in pretty constant correspondence with Mahan and gave him a lot of information about the Transport work for *The Story of the War in South Africa*, which he was then writing.

"I have, I think, copies of all his books; but that book and his *Life of Nelson* I am proud to have 'from the Author.' I am afraid this letter will not be of much help to you, but it will explain the circumstances of my friendship with Mahan. I never kept copies of any of my letters to him.

"With best wishes for the success of your biography, believe me,

"Yours faithfully,

"BOUVERIE CLARK."

Although the Admiral kept no copies of his letters to Mahan, he carefully preserved Mahan's letters to him, and their contents, which by his courtesy have been made available for the purposes of this book, throw light on Mahan's views on many important subjects. They show that Mahan had very decided political views, and that he was staunch Republican, being of the opinion, rightly or wrongly, that the Democratic Party were opposed to the creation of such a Navy as he considered essential to the safety and welfare of the United States:

"Being of the opposite party to the Administration, I am less concerned than as a patriot I ought to be; but in truth from the beginning of our nationality, in 1789, the Democratic Party has refused the maintenance of a Navy such as necessity, and therefore patriotism,

demands. I shall not feel secure while they are in office.”<sup>1</sup>

As regards British politics, his sympathies were on the side of the Conservatives and, despite his Irish Catholic descent, he was strongly opposed to Home Rule. He writes :

“ I am, and always have been, a convinced anti-Home Ruler, and I greatly disadmire the methods by which your present Government has reduced Great Britain to a single-chamber State. This business of the Lower House of the legislature assuming all power to itself for five years seems to me despotism like that of the French National Convention of 1792, only not tempered, as that was, by Revolution.”

The British alliance with Japan did not appeal to him : “ friendly relations, certainly—but no alliance.” He had no use whatever for the Turk. He thoroughly realised and appreciated the gravity of the menace of Germany, and in one letter expressed his views in these words :

“ She has now, what she had not forty years or less ago, a huge trade and industrial system resting on the sea. Your position and superior navy can throttle it in case of trouble. The Dreadnought gave her a chance to take a new start, nearly even, to maintain equality on the sea. Of course she can't do it, unless your people weaken ; but that she should take the off-chance of your so far weakening, through the Socialist element of the Labor Party, is not remarkable ; especially in view of the very wobbly—as it seems to me—attitude of the present Government. I myself think, and have thought ever since you struck hands with Japan to the temporary ruin of Russia, that your foreign policy has been on the wrong track. Germany could not spend so much on her Navy, nor ride so high a horse, if Russia were what she was. But your Government made France keep her

<sup>1</sup> The policy of the present Democratic Administration would seem to tend towards the construction of “ incomparably the strongest Navy in the world,” to quote the words of Secretary Daniels.

hands off, and Germany was only too glad to see Russia in a scrape from which she must issue weakened."

Among Mahan's many intellectual possessions was the priceless gift of common sense, that supreme quality which mercifully throws the sunlight of intelligence upon the sombre shadows of prejudice and ignorance, and when given full play evolves adequate solutions of most of the problems of life. It might almost be said to have been the key-note of his character. It seems to have stood him in good stead throughout his career, and have safely steered him through many a rocky shoal. He looked facts straight in the face and allowed neither sentiment nor inclination to sway him one pin's point from the convictions his mind dictated. Like many another faithful Cobdenite of the present generation, he realised that while the principle of free trade is sound, the changed conditions of the twentieth century render its application impracticable. In his own words :

"Although myself theoretically a free trader, I am satisfied that the system is impossible to-day. The world won't have it; and if the world don't want it, it is of no use one nation standing out. I believe you are on the road to what Dizzy conceived as Imperial Democracy. We are much the same; and I believe in it as inevitable."

His views on Latin-America are reflected in the following extract :

"The Chilians have disappointed everyone. I only have a compensation. I ventured dour predictions as to the result of the Latin-American incapacity for governing themselves; and just as I was about to publish the beggars settled down and behaved with remarkable decency for some time. However, when the book was in print, they broke out again from Guatemala down to Buenos Ayres; and when Chili joined in the riot the case was made, for it is always open to say during my life, "Why, look at Chili: after thirty years' quiet the



*Photo by Elliott & Fry.*

VICE-ADMIRAL SIR BOUVERIE CLARK, K.C.B.



blood was too strong," etc. *I am* sorry for them, however; such doings are bad for all hands. I don't see any likelihood of my coming your way. A man with a family and small means is pretty well anchored, and that is my fix. Unless my next ship takes me across, I am not likely to go."

Here is his frank and friendly comment on the Venezuelan incident:

"It is only six months since our President resisted firmly—and in my opinion most properly—considerable popular clamor to interfere in your difficulty with Nicaragua. I don't expect you to think him right now, but I think you should remember the other fact, and make allowance for a dictatorial, self-willed man, unused to diplomatic phrasing, expressing himself more strongly than he realised, or perhaps even now understands. Upon the right or wrong of the particular contention I express no opinion, but it seems to me clear that, although Great Britain is so great and long-established a Power here, it is impossible to say that her interests in the questions of this continent can possibly be as vital to her as ours to us. I will not believe war possible: if it comes, and I am in it, I think I shall have to request the Admiralty to hoist on your ships some other flag than the British—for, save our own, there is none other on which I should be so reluctant to fire."

He expressed in this wise his feelings at the time of the assassination of President McKinley:

"The death of our President was sad in its utter uselessness and folly. If the scoundrel had tried, he could not better have demonstrated the absurdity as well as wickedness of the crimes of which he is one instance. McKinley was at the very crown of his career. He could not have got higher; success had attended him throughout, and he had fairly reached the end of one set of difficulties. Another was opening before him, but as yet nothing had happened to dim in the least the lustre of his success. He was not only honored, but had conquered a singular affection in the whole com-

munity. Life could have brought him no more; the murderer simply secured him his safe place in our history. As regards the nation, the feeling of security was no more affected than it would be by the killing of the Emperor of Austria. I think there is a general feeling that Roosevelt is even a better man for the immediate future."

The two Admirals seem to have differed on the Turkish question, although there is no evidence of the extent to which Mahan's correspondent was supporting the Turk as a measure of political expediency or of the nature of that support. Constantinople and the control of the Dardanelles, the only gateway to the Mediterranean not in the safe custody of Great Britain, are of vast strategic and political importance, no matter in whose possession they may be, and this fact has for centuries postponed the inevitable doom of the Turk until the Great War arrived to settle the question.

The following letter from Mahan in October 1913 is fairly characteristic of his correspondence with Admiral Bouverie Clark. The contents of a number of other letters are referred to elsewhere:

"MARSHMERE, QUOGUE, LONG ISLAND.

"MY DEAR CLARK,

"Your birthday letter to me made a bull's-eye this time, arriving here on the forenoon of the very day. Many thanks for your good wishes and remembrance. I am very well for 73, but I certainly lose in a twelve-month. I have bathed in the sea all the summer, and for both surf and swimming still do well enough. I also still can ride my bicycle, though neither so fast nor so far. It takes indeed over twenty minutes and three or four miles to get my heart working right. In this flat country we rarely walk anywhere; our wheels are always at the door for use.

"My last letter to you must have been from Sicily, and probably from Palermo. We left there April 5 in a very slow Cunarder, the *Saxonia*, but had a delightful voyage, if it did take two weeks. After another

fortnight in town we came here and have remained steadily. In fact, it is our home, as we not only have here all our household goods, but have developed in the five years very attractive surroundings. Here, and here only, we are all satisfied for the summer. We have always a blaze of color from the flowers,<sup>1</sup> and more sunshine to the square foot and to the week than any place we know.

"You must not look for sympathy with your pro-Turk view from me, nor, I believe, from one American in a hundred. The individual Turk I daresay is a very decent fellow when his blood is not up, but I should suppose it as settled as any historical question can be that the Turkish race has no capacity for government, except by the sword. Now, the sword is a good thing in the background, but to be the only resource in peace as in war, and upon non-combatants, is not political management. The Balkan peoples have probably behaved very badly also, but they have demonstrated that they can organise and that they can lick the Turks. It is not the fighting quality of the Turk that has fallen, but the administrative incapacity of the Government, with, probably, a momentary absence of any single able man, that left the army, so called, a disorganised mob. Turkey is hopeless. Her very return upon Adrianople, though the natural thing to do, only mortgages her future more deeply.

"Sir Edwin Pears, for forty years resident in Constantinople, and now President of the European Bar there, in an article in the June *Contemporary*, reaffirmed what he had said twelve years before: 'Whenever the dead weight of Turkish misrule had been removed, the young Christian states have been fairly started on the path of civilisation and satisfy the reasonable expecta-

<sup>1</sup> The author has had the privilege of sharing with the Admiral's family the enjoyment of the garden at Marshmere, where the scent of the sweetbriar steals through the open windows, with a fragrant reminder "how lovesome a thing is a garden, down pathways of delight," and accentuating the truth of Gurney's inspired words:

"The kiss of the sun for pardon,

The song of the birds for mirth—

One is nearer God's heart in a garden

Than anywhere else on earth."

tions of the statesmen, etc., who sympathised with and aided them in their aspirations for freedom.' Pears was born in 1835, and so is of an age to have imbibed that old British feeling of the Crimean War, when, as Lord Salisbury said, you backed the wrong horse.

"I follow your politics with interest, but I find I can't read as much or as carefully as I did, so that I am less up than I could wish. You always have my best wishes for your country no less than for yourself.

"Always sincerely yours,

"A. T. MAHAN."

The culminating point of the career of Mahan's distinguished friend came in the Boer War, when he was appointed Director of Transports. The task was colossal. Several hundred thousand troops with equipment and war supplies for a peculiarly difficult campaign had to be transported six thousand miles by sea, and the lines of water communication preserved intact. Those were the historic days in which the German Emperor sent his interfering message to Kruger and England promptly replied by sending out the Flying Squadron under command of Admiral Arthur Taylor Dale, to whom the author has the honour of being cousin. On hearing of the effect of the Flying Squadron, President Kruger is reported to have said, "The little old lady sneezed, and the mighty war lord fell on his knees." Those were the days of Victoria the Good.

In *The Story of the War in South Africa*, published in 1900, Mahan describes the feat of the British Transport Service as an incident unprecedented, and in its success unsurpassed in military history; adding that as a triumph of organisation it reflected the utmost credit not only upon the Admiralty, but upon the Director of Transports, Admiral Bouverie Clark.

Mahan's conclusions as expressed in this book, from the point of view of the military strategist, are of interest. As regards *moral* and its effect upon the ultimate result

of the conflict, he was of opinion that two factors largely contributed to influence victory for the British forces. One was, that in order to ensure their wonderful mobility, the Boers had ever a horse tethered close at hand, on which to escape in the event of disaster—thus attracting their minds towards *defence*. As opposed to this the British officers enjoyed the reputation of being ever in the vanguard, willingly and cheerfully laying down their lives whenever the supreme sacrifice was in their opinion of benefit to the cause or to the welfare of the men under their command. This influenced their minds towards *attack*, and, as every strategist knows, attack, not defence, is the trump card; Will Shakespeare's *Once more unto the breach; close the wall up with our English dead.*" Mahan contends that the element of stupidity, which has been somewhat lavishly attributed to the British officer in cheaply holding his own life, has a military value, not only great but decisive; and he summarises the situation in these memorable words: "Having been thus reproached for now two centuries, the question is apt—*Where has it placed Great Britain among the nations of the earth?*"

Probably "Bobs" of Kandahar could have given as good an answer to that question as any man. Here is a letter of his to Mahan, written from Cape Town, January 23, 1900:

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

"Please accept my best thanks for your letter of the 19th December. It was most kind of you to think of writing to me, and I can assure you that your letter gave me great pleasure.

"As you write, the work here is more arduous by far than was at first supposed. We are learning how differently war must be conducted nowadays, and how impossible it is for positions, held by a determined enemy who can use their rifles with effect, to be taken by a frontal attack. We have had our lessons, and I trust we shall benefit by them.

"The Boers have proved themselves to be no ordinary tacticians, and the want of transport, confining us as it did to lines of railway, forced us to play into their hands. Matters are mending by degrees, and I trust you will receive good accounts of our proceedings ere very long.

"I hope when next you go to England, I may have the great pleasure of being able to welcome you there.

"With kindest regards,

"Believe me, yours very sincerely,

"ROBERTS."

Perhaps one of the noblest examples of an English officer's contempt for danger when duty calls was given by Nelson at Trafalgar, when, in order to encourage the crew of the *Victory* to do their utmost, he courted death by insisting upon exposing himself on deck in a uniform covered with brilliant orders, so that his brave men might instantly recognise him and derive inspiration from his presence among them in the very thick of the fight. His precious life paid forfeit; BUT, would England have won at Trafalgar had Nelson remained out of sight? <sup>1</sup>

At the end of the Boer War Mahan writes :

"Your war bill is immense; but the real question is whether, as an investment, you will be repaid by a renewed South Africa and by the increased weight of the Empire in the councils of the world. I think you will, and if so, while I could wish your bargain had been cheaper, it is a good one none the less. All this talk about the costliness of war is nonsense, except where one pays too dearly for the result, or where the result is worthless. Such a bargain is bad in any line of life. A railway run through a region that won't pay one per cent. on the investment is as bad a bargain as a resultless war. Of course it is a pity results can't be had without

<sup>1</sup> The query opens the flood-gates of historical speculation, and suggests another absorbing mental exercise, the contemplation of what might have been the history of England had Queen Elizabeth married, and peopled the throne with Tudor stock, to the elimination of the Stuarts and the unstaging of the Cromwellian drama.

killing people and upsetting trade ; but one has only to say Kruger, and realise that some bad things cannot be settled except by fighting.

“ Now as to Buller, of whom you speak, I don't know if I ever said my say to you, but he seems to me the most colossal failure of your war. I met him several times in 1894, and was much impressed by him. Never so astounded as by his actions ; not only by what seemed to me mistakes in generalship, but also by a certain seeming indecision—notably in his dealing with Warren. As regards popularity with his own command, we had singular evidence of the same sort in our civil war in McClellan ; a man of the highest repute before ; who proved a most signal failure, but whose men always swore by him, and probably still do. Like Buller, he too was a man of exceptional personal gallantry.”

Admiral Bouverie Clark evidently received a copy of *The Story of the War in South Africa* from the author, and his letter of thanks brought the following response from Mahan :

“ It was a very small matter to send you an advanced copy of the Boer War, after your invaluable help in giving me data for one of the most interesting—to me—and useful chapters in it. I wanted to lay it on you a little thicker than I did, for I know well enough that the smoother and more efficiently a machine runs, the less credit does the driver get with the outside world. But I was afraid my intention, by being too obvious, might defeat itself ; and I trusted that the unqualified praise I gave to the work itself, and coupling your name immediately with it as the person most directly responsible, would get you your dues with thinking men.”

Their cordial relations continued until the end, and when Mahan “ reached port after stormie seas ” and went to live in *the Garden of Forgiveness*, his old friend sent this tribute to his memory :

“ It has always been a source of pride to me to be able to say I had the friendship of so distinguished a man.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### AS STATESMAN

"The secret of Mahan's success was the breadth of view of the writer. One felt, in regarding his calm and often stately periods, that he was regarding history from a pinnacle whence nothing petty was visible, that he addressed his fellow-men of all nations, and that his judgment in matters where bias might have been looked for was serenely impartial. The books bore the impress of statesmanship in the highest meaning of the word."—SYDENHAM.

IN the popular acceptation of the word Mahan was not a statesman. He held no political portfolio, nor did he influence public opinion through the statesman's customary medium of oratory. But in a very practical sense he was a statesman of a high order, because he had the rare gift of foresight and the ability to make known to the world at large, in language all could understand, the supreme importance of adequate naval and maritime strength as a guarantee of national security. Moreover, he warned civilisation of its need for self-preservation against an existing but unacknowledged source of deadly peril.

Of his innumerable pronouncements conveying such warnings the following from an article he contributed to the *Daily Mail* of October 31, 1910,<sup>1</sup> is characteristic :

"These things are not said to incite strife, for indeed they are not new, even if ignored. I would now, as I hoped ten years ago, that things had taken a different turn. But as they are, it is in the interests of peace to point out that no force in Europe can so act as a deterrent from war, induced by the possible ambitious or otherwise inevitable tendencies of Middle Europe as can

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in the Appendix by courtesy of the Editor of the *Daily Mail*.

the Navy of Great Britain. The dividing line cleft between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente is too plain to be ignored. It has been emphasised at Algeciras, in Crete, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in other incidents less conspicuous but equally known. Under such circumstances the one salvation from war is readiness for war, based upon a clear appreciation of what can best be done and what should most be feared."

The pages of *The Interest of America in International Conditions* are full of timely warning to all but the intellectually blind, and some of the technicalities and dangers of the international situation are enlarged upon in the articles published under the title of *Some Neglected Aspects of War*. An intimate glimpse into Mahan's vision as a statesman may be had by a perusal of his masterly analysis of the strategic features of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea written in 1897. It might be safely contended that probably no other man living could have written that article. In it Mahan demonstrates the future military significance of the waters known as the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, and their ultimate commercial importance resulting from the development of the United States and the inevitable completion of a canal through the Isthmus. He first outlines the political and strategic history of the Mediterranean, and then with the aid of an excellent map—herein reproduced—he illustrates the eventual prominence of the trade routes converging upon the Isthmus, and the relative strategic values of Cuba, Jamaica, the Windward Passage, Santa Lucia, Martinique, St. Thomas, Santo Domingo, the mouth of the Mississippi, Pensacola, the Strait of Florida, the Yucatan Channel, the Mona and Anegada Passages, and other points of military interest within the sphere of sea power, of which he asserts the Caribbean is pre-eminently the domain. He holds that Cuba, largely on account of her size, enjoys the preponderant strategic position of the Caribbean,

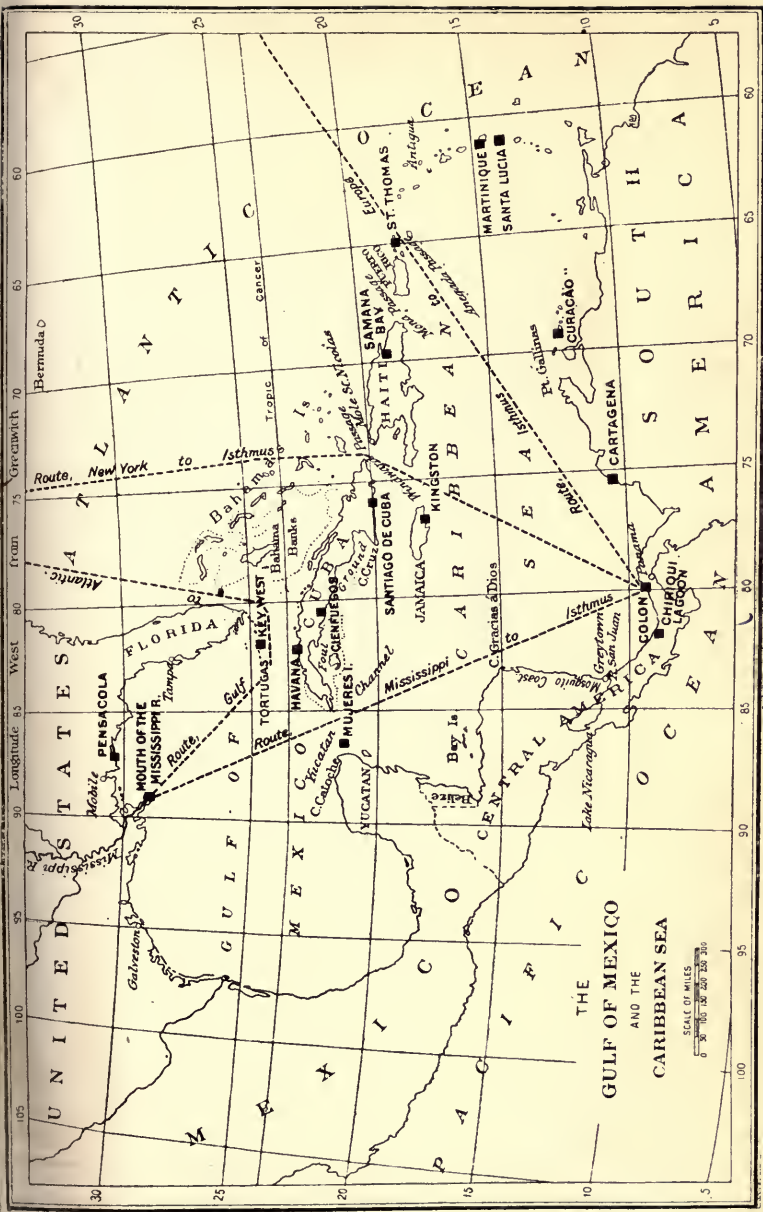
with Jamaica a good second, and that "a superior navy resting on Santiago de Cuba or Jamaica could very seriously incommode all access of the United States to the Caribbean mainland, and especially to the Isthmus." In the following words Mahan comments upon the dramatic history of Jamaica :

"When one recalls that it passed into the hands of Great Britain in the days of Cromwell by accidental conquest, the expedition having been intended primarily against Santo Domingo ; that in the two centuries and a half which have since intervened it has played no part adequate to its advantages, such as now looms before it ; that, by all the probabilities, it should have been reconquered and retained by Spain in the war of the American Revolution ; and when, again, it is recalled that a like accident and a like subsequent uncertainty attended the conquest and retention of the decisive Mediterranean positions of Gibraltar and Malta, one marvels whether incidents so widely separated in time and place, all tending towards one end—the maritime predominance of Great Britain—can be accidents, or are simply the exhibition of a Personal Will, acting through all time, with purpose deliberate and consecutive, to ends not yet discerned."

Mahan's summary of the military situation is to the effect that the islands of Cuba and Jamaica are the real rivals for control of the Caribbean and of the Gulf of Mexico ; that the strategic centre of interest for both is to be found in the Windward Passage, and that a mobile force capable of keeping the Windward Passage open throughout hostilities would be necessary in order to render Jamaica strategically equal or superior to Cuba.

In *Lessons of the War with Spain* he draws special attention to the strategic importance of Puerto Rico :

"The military importance of Puerto Rico should never be lost sight of by us as long as we have any responsibility, direct or indirect, for the safety or independence



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of Cuba. Puerto Rico, considered militarily, is to Cuba, to the future Isthmian Canal and to our Pacific coast, what Malta is, or may be, to Egypt and the beyond ; and there is for us the like necessity to hold and strengthen the one, that there is for Great Britain to hold the other for the security of her position in Egypt, for the use of the Suez Canal and for the control of the route to India. It would be extremely difficult for a European state to sustain operations in the Eastern Mediterranean with a British fleet at Malta. Similarly it would be very difficult for a transatlantic State to maintain operations in the Western Caribbean with a United States fleet based upon Puerto Rico and the adjacent islands. The same reasons prompted Bonaparte to seize Malta in his expedition against Egypt and India in 1798. In his masterly eyes, as in those of Nelson, it was essential to the communications between France, Egypt, and India. His scheme failed, not because Malta was less than invaluable, but for want of adequate naval strength, without which no maritime position possesses value."

There is a wealth of significance in this brief note from the man whom many consider the greatest American of modern times :

" WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON,  
" November 21, 1904.

" MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

" Your letter pleases me greatly. I thank you for it.

" I wish you could get on here. There are so many things I should like to speak to you about.

" Faithfully yours,

" THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

Mr. Roosevelt held the opinion that Mahan was the only great naval writer who possessed in international matters the mind of a statesman of the first class. Haply Mr. Roosevelt realised the extent of Mahan's admiration for him. In one of his letters to his friend Sir Bouverie Clark in 1906 Mahan said :

" Your letter spoke of the President's spelling reform,

then I suppose a new thing. To-day's paper announces that the Lower House has passed a resolution contrary to it, and the President has 'come down.' With his usual luck, I suppose this will increase his popularity; it will probably take immensely, 'bowing to the will of the people, as expressed by their representatives.' He deserves it, however; he is a thoroughly good fellow all round; honest and immensely shrewd. Better judges than I say he is one of the most sagacious 'politicians' in the country; but from beginning to end his strength with the people has been his downright courage, to which they are little used in public men."

As with other authors, certain portions of Mahan's writings specially commended themselves to the critics. The *Athenæum* had this to say of three chapters of *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*:

"We have little hesitation in saying that the two chapters examining the war against commerce before and after the issue of the Berlin Decree of 1806 and the last chapter summing up 'The Function of Sea Power and the Policy of Great Britain in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars' rank beside the most profound historical work of the century. We do not know whenever before has the true aspect of the 'noiseless pressure'<sup>1</sup> been fully revealed. The remarkable character of these chapters is exhibited in their statesmanlike grasp of all controlling circumstances and the lucidity with which the conclusions are set out."

In the following letter Mr. John Hay, one of the most capable diplomats that have ever represented Uncle Sam, thanked Mahan for an expression of apprecia-

<sup>1</sup> The battles of naval warfare are few compared with those on land; it is the unremitting daily silent pressure of naval force, when it has attained command of the sea against an opponent—the continuous blocking of communication—which has made sea power so decisive an element in the history of the world."—A. T. MAHAN.

tion of the great work he was doing as Secretary of State :

“ WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
“ November 23, 1904.

“ MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

“ I have received your letter of the 20th of November, and I am greatly obliged to you for your kind references to our work in the State Department. I receive so many compliments which I know I do not deserve, from people who have no capacity for judging, that when I occasionally get a generous word of support from the highest possible authority, like yourself, I am extremely grateful for it, and begin to doubt my own distrust.

“ Yours sincerely,  
“ JOHN HAY.”

The following correspondence tells its own story :

“ SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & COMPANY,  
“ LONDON, E.C.,  
“ January 6, 1893.

“ To Captain A. T. Mahan, U.S.N.,

“ President,

“ United States Naval War College.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ We have the honour to be the English publishers of your invaluable and, to an Englishman, enchanting books on the Influence of Sea Power. I have read your books from cover to cover with the keenest interest, and I read them as one who has almost from childhood recognised that only by sea power can we hope to exist as a powerful nation. . . .

“ My object in writing this letter—and I hope you will pardon my presumption in doing so—is to ask you if you would object to give me for publication very briefly your opinion on these points :

“ 1. Would the making of a submarine tunnel between England and France, apart from commercial considerations, be a wise or an unwise policy ?

“ 2. Would such a tunnel be a danger to our sea power ?

“Your opinion and authority would have immense weight, and if I venture to ask for it, it is in the name of those dead British naval heroes the importance of whose devoted services to their country and to the world has never before been so brilliantly stated and abundantly proved as in your own writings.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient Servant,

“R. B. MARSTON,

“*Director, S. L. M. & Co., Ltd.*”

The tenor of Mahan's reply is contained in these words :

“Such a tunnel would be a bridge between France and Great Britain. . . . Historically, every bridge is an element of danger. . . . It may safely be predicted that once built it will not be destroyed, but that throughout any war reliance will be placed upon its defences. History teaches us again and again the dangers of surprise—the dangers of over-confidence. You will have continually in your midst an open gap, absorbing a large part of your available force for its protection. As to the effect upon the sea power of Great Britain, it is obvious that your Navy, were it tenfold its present strength, can neither protect the tunnel nor remedy the evils incurred by its passing into the hands of an enemy. . . . It is an odd kind of thing—making one lay down the pen and muse—to think of an open passage to Great Britain in the hands of a foe, and British ships, like toothless dogs, prowling vainly round the shores of the island.”

Mahan did national service by acting as the confidential adviser of leading statesmen of the day. The time is not yet ripe for the publication of all the documents found among his effects, but some idea of the national importance of his activities in this direction may be gained by reading between the lines of the following portions of his correspondence with Senator Lodge, who has kindly consented to their publication, adding on his own behalf that he is glad to do anything to testify to

his friendship for Admiral Mahan and his admiration for his great abilities :

“ 45 W. 35TH ST.,  
“ *January 5, 1912.*

“ MY DEAR MR. LODGE,

“ I am sensible that there is some incongruity in a man of my slight equipment and practice of affairs making a suggestion to one of your long antecedents concerning a provision of the pending treaties ; but the following argument has had such weight in my mind that I venture to submit it.

“ 1. By the universal custom of nations it has been, and still is, lawful and proper for nations to acquire or transfer territory, by war, by purchase, by exchange. So invariable has this rule been, that I presume it might claim the standing of a ‘ principle of law,’ as cited in Article 1 of the treaties. We acquired the Philippines by purchase. Porto Rico as the result of war. Germany has just acquired a huge African territory by transfer from France.

“ 2. Up to 1823 this principle of law applied in America, as well as in other quarters of the world. Actually, in 1809 and 1810, for instance, Great Britain acquired Martinique and Guadeloupe from France by conquest and returned them in 1814. Since 1823, and at present, the United States by the Monroe Doctrine opposes and forbids such transfers, under threat of opposition by us ; but how can this policy of a single nation affect a principle of the law of nations, when a case involving such a principle is brought before any tribunal ? whether the tribunal be one of ultimate arbitration or intermediary, such as the proposed Joint High Commission. How can such a tribunal hold that the question of transfer of territory, everywhere recognised and practised, is not ‘ justiciable ’ by the application of principles of law, ‘ when such law exists in the shape of established practice and custom everywhere except in the American hemisphere, and there only because of the pronouncement of a single state, unsupported either by general assent or by treaty ?

“ 3. I am told that a matter of government policy

is *ipso facto* 'not justiciable.' If that means that a State will not submit to arbitration a matter it considers one of vital policy, I agree; but it appears to me that such an assertion merely begs the question. Such a State refuses, not because there is no law to govern a tribunal in the case, but because its vital interests are in its mind above law. That is a tenable position, and one on which all States act: an attribute of sovereignty recognised by all. But this does not deprive the existing law of its validity, nor make the matter one that is not 'justiciable by reason of being susceptible of decision by the application of the principles of law.' On the contrary, the matter remains one that is so justiciable, because there is an applicable law, until by some change of law, either by general consent or by specific treaty, it is removed from that category of questions.

"4. It appears to me that there is prevalent a mental confusion between a question being non-justiciable because a State as a matter of policy will not submit it to arbitration, and its being non-justiciable because there is no law that applies to the case. The only reconciling factor that I can see is the general acceptance, as of a fundamental principle, that when a State defines a national determination as a national policy, that policy merely ceases to be justiciable by law, however long the applicable law may have existed.

"5. This is substantially what Italy has lately done—very rightly in my judgment—and other States have silently accepted. Such tacit acceptance is a step toward the full acceptance of the principle just stated; but it overturns in so far most of the labored procedure of the Hague Conference, by leaving each State the final judge in its own case, unbound even by specific agreements, still less by 'principles of law.' That a State is such final judge has been an axiom ever since I first studied international law; qualified possibly by treaty obligations, when such exist, but not by the mere consensus which we call international law.

"6. I cannot but think the pending treaties fatally vitiated by a confusion of thought which defines 'justiciable' as 'capable of settlement by principles of law,' yet apparently assumes that any principle of law

disappears before a national pronouncement. What then is law ?

“ Sincerely yours,

“ A. T. MAHAN.

“ Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge,

“ U.S. Senator.”

Extracts from Senator Lodge's correspondence with Mahan :

“ *January 9, 1912,*

“ I have your letters with the enclosures, which I have read with great interest. The one about the treaties with Germany is unanswerable, and is put with great force and clearness. I have not seen that precise point put yet, but it is a very telling one, and could be used by those opposed to the treaties, if they chose to use it, with great effect. Your letter to me is also equally strong. I am afraid, however, that you are correct in your judgment that it would not do for you in your position as an executive officer of the Government to publish it, but if I am forced to discuss the treaties in public, which I do not want to do, I shall be glad to use the points you make. It can only harm our foreign relations to have a great public debate in the Senate upon these treaties. Foreign relations ought never to be dealt with in that way, but if the President insists that the treaties must be passed unamended and without a resolution covering the point of governmental policy, like Mr. Root's, and the right to pass upon the arbitrability of all questions after the decision of the International Commission of Inquiry, such as I have prepared, we shall have this protracted debate. There is a great dissatisfaction in the Senate with the treaties. I know of scarcely any Senators who are heartily in favor of them as they stand, even those who are anxious to support the Administration. I am very much troubled about them, and how it will work out I really cannot tell.”

“ *April 9, 1912.*

“ I have read the published letter which you sent me with the greatest possible interest, and am much obliged for it. It gives me a number of new points,

admirably stated, which I very much want when I come to discuss the battleships in the Senate. I am also glad to have the suggestion in your letter. I shall rob you in a perfectly conscienceless way, and use all your suggestions freely for the benefit of my speech. I think we shall put the two ships on in the Senate, for, so far as I can judge, the Senate is friendly to them. I hope the House will accept them. I knew that the House would be glad to vote them, being held back only by the party caucus."

"July 6, 1912.

"You have probably seen that we passed the Naval Bill yesterday, and carried two battleships by a vote of 43 to 12, nearly four to one. We decided that as we were sure to carry them it was not worth while to have any debate, but that, on the contrary, it was important to get the Bill through as soon as possible."

"July 16, 1913.

"It is hardly necessary to say that I am in full accord with you, and I also agree that we are faced with a very difficult situation in regard to Japan, and I am sorry to say that I do not think the present Administration appears to realise it. I cannot make out what they are doing, for I am not in their confidence, but there seems to be a feebleness in the way in which they are handling it which makes me very anxious. The fact is that the Japanese are demanding what no nation can demand of another unless that other is subject and tributary. We have no right to force our people upon Japan or to compel them to pass land laws which will allow our people to buy their lands, and they cannot do it to us. But they are new in the family of nations, and they do not, apparently, understand this. I am very glad that you wrote the letter, which is a most valuable and important one."

Although by nature unusually reserved and unassuming, Mahan was quite capable of holding his own in any company when occasion demanded. In *The New American Navy* Mr. Long records that on one occasion

he demolished the Secretary of War, General Russell Alger, in front of President McKinley :

“ I remember rather a pretty scrimmage between him and Captain Mahan in the White House when President McKinley was present. The Navy had been helpful in connection with the Army transports and in landing troops, and especially efficient in destroying the Spanish fleet. The Secretary of War was complaining because we did not take the risk of blowing up our ships by going over the mines at Santiago Harbor and capturing also the city, which the Army was undertaking to capture, though the Navy was bound to help, of course, all it could. Mahan at last sailed into him, telling him that he didn't know anything about the use or purpose of the Navy, which rather amused the President, who always liked a little badinage. The Secretary of War, with his usual good-nature, took the matter in good part.”

The matter in some of his essays contained in the volume published as *The Interest of America in Sea Power Present and Future* brought upon him the disapproval of his friend and admirer G. S. Clarke, now Lord Sydenham. In *Mahan's Counsels to the United States*, which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, Clarke regretfully complained :

“ In magazine articles dealing with questions of the day, descending from the general to the particular and directed to a limited and special purpose, it would not be just to expect the same lofty standard. Nevertheless, while making full allowance for the change of conditions, I have read this volume of collected essays with disappointment. Only here and there is it possible to trace the hand of the author of *The Influence of Sea Power on History*. No great nation ever needed guidance more than does the United States to-day, the strong guidance of a master mind, fearlessly offered, in language which could not be misunderstood. No one is so well qualified as Captain Mahan to render this service to his country ;

but the needed guidance is not forthcoming, for the statesmanship is too frequently wanting."

He then proceeds to quote chapter and verse, and to other grounds for criticism he further adds these :

" Our press, in its usual superior manner, is wont to lecture the United States in common with all other Powers ; but of animosity or of positive dislike there were no traces during the period of tension produced by President Cleveland's message. . . . Absurd as it may seem, there were large numbers of Americans who honestly believed that they were supporting an enlightened Republic—that of Venezuela!—against a benighted despotism. It did not occur to them that Venezuela is a Republic only in name, and that they were upholding barbarism against civilisation—gross corruption against pure government. The naive surprise and delight of the 'boy journalist' who recently paid us a visit tells a tale. Nothing was as his school-books had led him to expect. . . . In the Venezuela dispute the United States lost, as Captain Mahan admits, and rightly lost the sympathy of the civilised world. Why did he not fearlessly expound to his countrymen the cause of this general revulsion of sentiment ? . . . If then the United States, as sooner or later they must, accept the obligations and the responsibilities of a great nation, I believe that the movement will be of happy augury to the progress of the world. But the new policy, the policy of 'looking outwards,' will demand radical administrative changes, the abandonment of some cherished insular ideas, and the modification of a constitution eminently unfitted to meet the requirements of expansion across the seas. It is not a question only of a navy, of coast fortifications, of preparations for war, but of leading the people of the United States to forgo their habitual concentration upon their internal affairs and to seek to play a worthy part in moulding the destinies of mankind. Thus arises the vital need of statesmanlike guidance and of fearless speaking, and it is because I have failed to find such guidance so expressed in these essays that I venture

to criticise the master to whose brilliant teaching Great Britain is eternally indebted."

There are letters the character of which is essentially that of a communication from one statesman to another : here is one :

" June 8, 1911.

" DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

" A couple of days ago Mrs. Roosevelt showed me with triumph your letter to the *Times*, which I need hardly say I greatly appreciate ; and immediately afterwards I picked up the *Century* and read your admirable piece on the Panama Canal.

" I do wish our authorities would consult you before committing themselves to foolish propositions, which it would be dishonourable either to carry out or to refuse to carry out, when once they had been made into solemn agreements. Any man who knows you knows that you are incapable of advocating national wrongdoing just as you are incapable of advocating individual wrongdoing. But it is not virtue—it is mere weakness of the kind that ultimately leads to wickedness—to refuse to look facts in the face, and to take a position which implies the abandonment of national self-respect.

" With Great Britain, I firmly believe, no difficulty can arise which we cannot solve by arbitration. But if Great Britain claimed as regards us what not many years ago the British Government claimed as regards their own South African possessions, that is, the right to permit an unlimited coolie emigration to the United States, this country would not arbitrate the question, and would no more admit the coolies than South Africa and Australia and British Columbia would do so. I had to refuse point blank to arbitrate the Alaskan boundary matter, and we got a settlement of that case only because I was forced to explain that if the Commission could not agree, I would have no alternative but myself to reduce to possession the disputed territory. The settlement of the Alaskan boundary settled the last serious trouble between the British Empire and ourselves, as everything else could be arbitrated ; but neither England nor the

United States should agree to do something that they could not live up to.

"If we repeated with an English vessel the experiment Captain Wilkes tried in '61, England would not arbitrate the matter; she would say that we had to do as we did in '61, that is, express regret and undo the wrong we had done; and England would be quite right in taking such a position. I feel very differently toward England from the way I feel toward Germany, but surely we must consider before making a treaty whether we could then refuse to make such a treaty with Germany. I do not believe this nation is prepared to arbitrate such questions as to whether it shall fortify the canal, as to whether it shall retain Hawaii, nor yet to arbitrate the Monroe Doctrine nor the right to exclude immigrants if it thinks wise to do so.

"Faithfully yours,

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

"Captain Alfred T. Mahan,

"160, West 86th Street,

"New York."

The following extracts from a letter to a friend in 1909 reflect Mahan's views on the subject of Germany and the Monroe Doctrine :

"The Naval Appropriation Bill reached me to-day, and I am much indebted for it. My chief purpose in asking was, that if both Houses have passed the Senate clause, recommending the division of the Battleship Fleet between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, I felt it would be time for naval officers to speak out for the enlightenment of the people and the folly of Congress in dealing with such matters. As you know, the remonstrance of the 'one man,'<sup>1</sup> the President, with the House Committee helped largely to prevent this suicidal recommendation.

"Owing to the refusal of Congress to give the four new ships recommended by the 'one man,' the German Navy will in 1912—in three years—have a stronger battle fleet in A.B.G. ships than we. What then shall

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Roosevelt.

we say, upon what shall we rely, if she, on occasion arising, defy us in the Monroe Doctrine? How do we propose to keep that national idol on its feet without a superior Navy?

“It may be said that in any event the British Navy is far superior to ours; indeed, to a degree that no one proposes to overtake: granted, for it is true. The reply is that Great Britain is already overloaded with colonial possessions; her present problem being how to bring into a more solid framework of mutual support those she now has, not to acquire more American territory, which is the gist of that to which the Monroe Doctrine opposes itself. The exposure of Canada, in case of war with the United States, would at once bring to an acute state the question of the future political relations of that Dominion. Besides, we have now a long history of discussion with Great Britain, in which the Monroe Doctrine has been the avowed, or the latent, motive; and it is assured that that country has no reason now, and no disposition, to traverse our position in the matter.

“It is very different with Germany. Her commercial and colonial development is a matter of yesterday; and the rapidity in both directions testifies at once to strong national purpose and to masterly organisation of effort. But the colonies she now has are far from the first order of commercial value, and all other land throughout the world is now pre-empted, and occupied—politically if not actually. Germany cannot but desire acquisition; and acquisition by war is a legitimate international transaction. In natural resources, as distinguished from the value as a market which an adequate population constitutes as a body of consumers, South America probably leads the world; and the smallness of present population is an additional advantage from the point of view of colonial acquisition.

“In addition, should the hopes of Holland, from the Queen’s approaching accouchement, be again disappointed, we shall be definitely menaced with the possibility of Germany, with the second strongest Navy in Europe, becoming heir to the Dutch colonial system. Is it to be imagined that with a claim so entirely lawful she

would respect our position as to the transfer of American territory from one European Power to another? She has done so so far; but her Navy has not been superior.

"The question of expenditure is not what we are willing to pay, but whether we are willing to hold our most cherished international dogma—the Monroe Doctrine—at the mercy of a superior Navy, the possessors of which may have good reason to disregard our views."

The eminent jurist Sir Frederick Pollock wrote Mahan this note from the Athenæum Club:

"May 8, 1897.

"DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

"I have been profiting by the Easter vacation to read your *Life of Nelson*. It is worth a shipload of arbitration treaties.

"Yours truly,  
"F. POLLOCK."

Here is an extract from a letter from the Editor of *McClure's Magazine*, in 1902, which reflects the opinion in which Mahan was held by the publishers of the day:

"We were all talking about the remarks you made at the Columbia exercises. Is there not there the subject of an article for us? It seems to me that we should particularly like to have something from you along those lines, but then we should like to have something along almost any line you choose to think, so that perhaps it were better to inquire what you are thinking about. What interests you at present? For example, are you considering at all the future of our country in its relations to the policy of the present administration? I should much appreciate your writing us about this, or, if you prefer, I might go down to see and talk with you."

Soon after the publication of the first Sea Power books, the Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* wrote Mahan that although he appreciated the loss which his retirement

would entail upon the Naval Service, he would gladly welcome his more decided accession to the ranks of literature, and especially the literature of public affairs.

No man who had not in him more than a little of the statesman could have written *The Problem of Asia*. A statesman has been defined as a politician who has broad and sagacious views and distinguished ability in dealing with the questions arising in public affairs. In this acceptation of the term Mahan was hardly a statesman, because he was not a politician, and minor local affairs did not appeal to him. But as an experienced and learned counsellor upon whose advice the leading men of the nation could rely to guide them safely through the mazes of international policy, more especially in its direct application to the larger issues of naval and maritime affairs, Mahan exhibited the qualities of a statesman, and in such capacity was of invaluable service to his country.

In the words of Katrina Trask :

“ *He was, indeed, a statesman—he foresaw  
The far-off vision of great things to be,  
And strove to bring it near ; with vital words  
He called on men to follow the far gleam ;  
And warned them also of impending ills.  
He knew the fatal rocks and shallow shoals,  
But steered his course by the clear star of faith.  
He was a patriot—he put aside  
His own advantage for the sake of truth ;  
Foregoing splendour of proud palaces,  
He was content to build protecting dikes  
Against the inrush of disastrous tides.*”

Few statesmen accomplish more than a wise administration of the contemporary affairs of their own country, but Mahan has mightily influenced the destinies of many nations, not only in the historic times which have so dramatically distinguished the opening of the twentieth century, but in countless generations to come.

## CHAPTER XX

### AS PROPHET

"There is no man in the wide world to-day whose opinions on all concerned with the branch of learning which he has made his own command greater respect and wider attention than those of Rear-Admiral Mahan. It is no exaggeration to say that from the days of Raleigh to those of Mahan no other author had gained a hearing for such a doctrine. Nowadays the case is widely different. Mahan's doctrines are the commonplace of naval political thought, and it is tacitly recognised that no man is entitled to raise his voice in a public discussion until he has inwardly digested them."—"A Birthday Appreciation," *The (London) Morning Post*.

IN articles in the American press commenting on the predominant influence of the British Fleet in having made possible a victorious peace, the wish has been expressed that Admiral Mahan were here to see the practical confirmation of his doctrines. Perhaps he does see them in spirit. Who knows?

His later works must be read to appreciate the full measure of his political foresight. They abound in statesmanlike prophecy. In 1907 he wrote :

"The persuasion that war, as an inevitable factor in history, is a thing of the past, is a public prepossession which will disappear when men study questions of international relations in their world-wide bearing; which very few do. Fallacies are in their working as insidious as bacteria are in theirs. There are at this moment pending before the world, unnoted by most, momentous differences which cannot be settled by arbitration."

In *The Interest of America in International Conditions*, given to the world in 1910, he accurately foreshadowed

the late war with dramatic fidelity. He held that the attack would come from Germany. He predicted that Italy's sympathies with England would cause her to join the Entente against the inevitable combination of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and gave convincing reasons for all his contentions. He demonstrated the inherent weakness of Russia, showed that the naval position and maritime power of Great Britain was supreme, "the sole military force in the world superior to anything that Germany can as yet bring into action," and forewarned the nations that concentration of the British Fleet in the North Sea successfully blockading German ports would decide the issue.

A writer in the *Marine Rundschau*, describing Mahan's chief characteristics, deplors evidences of his lack of sympathy with Germany and German ambitions, and complains that "in many places in his writings he speaks with not exactly good feeling about the aggressive military spirit and such like threatening characteristics of the present German Empire." This writer confirms the impression that Mahan did not study Clausewitz, the great German exponent of warfare.

A special correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, whose name is unfortunately not known to the author, writing from New York just after the surrender of the German Fleet to Admiral Beatty, recounts in the following words a remarkable instance of his prophetic foresight :

"Shortly after the war started, Admiral Mahan received me in his Long Island home, and predicted that Germany's 'future upon the sea' would end in a sail to English ports to surrender, and with the realisation of the prophecy of the great naval theoretician, steeped in history and fact, we here believe that the legend of the German superman disappears for all time."

Prior to the publication of the famous Sea Power trilogy, it is doubtful if any nation actively realised the paramount importance of a large and efficient mercantile

marine. Its supreme value has been proved in the world-wide conflict just ended. The creator of the modern conception of Sea Power thoroughly appreciated it, and foresaw its influence in what he knew to be the great coming struggle of all time. Mr. Edward Hurley, Chairman of the United States Shipping Board, confirms Mahan in this tribute to Britain's merchant service :

"It has long been the dominating force in ocean commerce and will continue to be after the war. Autocracy might have throttled the world without the British merchant marine,<sup>1</sup> mobilising the men and food of the British Empire. We owe British merchant ships and sailors a great debt for transporting our man-power to France."

Mahan's private correspondence also sustains the impression that he had a very clear and statesmanlike vision of the coming conflict. In a letter to his friend Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark a couple of years before hostilities broke out, he expressed the opinion that, despite apparently smooth water, there was more trouble ahead everywhere than "our ignorant optimists believe." These obsessions he confirmed in newspaper and magazine articles, and in press interviews. In what he believed to be the interests of his country, both publicly and privately, and in his confidential relations with the Government, he constituted himself an unceasing advocate of "more battleships."

Another dictum, comprehensive appreciation of which

<sup>1</sup> "Viewed from whatever standpoint we may choose, it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion than that the British mercantile marine is not only the greatest British industry, but that, from its overwhelming importance and far-reaching effect upon mankind, it is the most stupendous monument of human energy and enterprise that the world has ever seen. Yet, with that peculiar absence of pride in our own institutions, that easy-going magnanimity which, in spite of what not only foreign writers, but many of our own authors, assert, is really the most distinctive characteristic of the British race, we show but little appreciation of this marvel of commercial genius and concentrated effort."—FRANK BULLEN.

by the British military authorities might have saved tens of thousands of priceless young lives in the calamitous attempt to force the Dardanelles, is contained on page 323 of his work on *Naval Strategy*. There he says that :

“ Passages having a situation like that of the Windward channel bear an analogy to bridges over a river, except that, unless exceedingly narrow, they must be held by an active force instead of by permanent works ; for they cannot be closed by fortifications. If, for instance, the Windward channel between Cuba and Haiti were two miles wide, with anchorage depth, it could be made impregnable by forts and torpedoes against all ordinary attack or passage. Natural water bridges of such a character are of rare occurrence. The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles are a conspicuous example of such, and in the hands of a strong nation could not be forced.”

In common with other great authorities, Mahan was by no means infallible. Some of his naval friends were of opinion that his professional reputation might have stood even higher than it did had he published nothing but the three classics, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, and *The Life of Nelson*. The majority, however, did not share this opinion, notwithstanding the undeniably inferior standard of some of his subsequent writings as compared with his three masterpieces. No one excelled him in historical treatment of his subject. In dealing with the intricacies of naval strategy his views met with the approval of his professional brethren, but the consensus of naval expert opinion did not always uphold his ideas regarding some of the technical details of the most effective distribution of the various elements of fighting power in warships. After the defeat of the Russian Fleet by the Japanese in 1905, Mahan wrote an article under the title of *Reflections, Historic and Other, suggested by the Battle of the Sea*

of Japan. With some of the conclusions drawn in that article, which was published in the *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, vol. xxxii, Admiral Sims did not agree, and his views,<sup>1</sup> as well as Mahan's article, were reprinted, at the instance of the United States Senate, in *The Congressional Record* of the second session of the 59th Congress, Doc. 213, 1906-1907. The points at issue were the relative and comparative values of speed, range, size of guns, and effectiveness of gunfire. Given a limited expenditure, Admiral Sims unreservedly advocated the largest possible number of the most powerful guns and the highest possible rate of speed, compatible with tonnage, concentrated in a few large all-big-gun ships; whereas, subject to a similarly limited expenditure, Mahan contended for a larger number of mixed-battery ships with powerful secondary batteries of 6-inch guns, to attain which he was willing to forgo the maximum possibilities of power in range and speed. He rather minimised the advantage gained by the superior speed of the Japanese ships in the battle under review, which Admiral Sims held was won by the 12-inch guns, owing to their range and accurate fire in the favourable positions secured and maintained for them by superior speed; explaining that, contrary to the original impressions, experience has now conclusively proved that at modern battleship ranges it is more difficult to hit with a 6-inch than with a 12-inch gun, owing to the angle of fall and the respective danger spaces, and adding that the important consideration as a standard of efficiency for all kinds of gunfire is *rapidity of hitting* rather than *volume of fire*.

Admiral Sims does Mahan the justice to explain very clearly that he was fortunate enough to be in possession of some highly important details of the actual fighting and of the effectiveness of the shellfire that were not

<sup>1</sup> "The inherent tactical qualities of all-big-gun, one-calibre battleships of high speed, large displacement and gun-power."

available when Mahan wrote his article, which he feels convinced was prepared under a misapprehension of the facts. He suggests, however, that Mahan apparently failed to appreciate the inherent and very important tactical qualities of large vessels, and that some of his conclusions were founded on mistaken principles of gunfire.

The following extracts from an article contributed to the *Daily Mail* under date of July 6, 1910, four years before the Germans launched their criminal assault upon the sacred liberties of the world, afford an illustration of Mahan's prophetic vision, as well as his statesmanlike grasp of fundamental facts and his gift for calm, impartial statement, as if coming from a mind entirely detached from all sentimental considerations, although dealing with matters of momentous import <sup>1</sup>:

"The huge development of the German Navy within the past decade, and the assurance that the present rate of expenditure—over £20,000,000 annually—will be maintained for several years to come, is a matter of general international importance. Elsewhere, and in another connection, I have had occasion to point out, in the American press, that the question immediately raised is not what Germany means to do with this force, which already is second only to that of Great Britain, and for which is contemplated a further large expansion. The real subject for the reflection of every person, statesman or private, patriotically interested in his country's future, is the simple existence present, and still more prospective, of a new international factor to be reckoned with in all calculations where oppositions of national interests may arise. From this point of view it is not particularly interesting to inquire whether Germany has any far-reaching purposes of invading Great Britain or of dismembering her Empire.

"The people of Great Britain should not depend

<sup>1</sup> By the courtesy of the proprietors of the *Daily Mail*, this prophetic article, full of warning to British voters, is reproduced in the appendix.

upon apprehension of Germany's intentions to attack in order to appraise their naval necessities and awaken their determinations. Resolutions based upon such artificial stimulus are much like the excitement of drink, liable to excess in demonstration, as well as to misdirection and ultimate collapse in energy, as momentary panic is succeeded by reaction. Unemotional business-like recognition of facts, in their due proportions, befits national policies, to be followed by well-weighed measures corresponding to the exigency of the discernible future. This is the manly way, neither over-confident nor over-fearful; above all, not agitated. Of such steadfast attitude, timeliness of precaution is an essential element. Postponement of precaution is the sure road to panic in emergency. An English naval worthy of two centuries ago aptly said, 'It is better to be afraid now than next summer when the French Fleet will be in the Channel.'

"In the present condition of Europe the creation of the German Fleet, with its existing and proposed development, has necessitated the concentration in British waters of more than four-fifths of the disposable British battle force. These facts constitute Germany the immediate antagonist of Great Britain. I do not say for a moment that this manifests Germany's purpose; I simply state the military and international fact without inference as to motives."

Mahan prophesied that submarines would not subjugate battleships. He prophesied that Zeppelins would be found to have been greatly over-rated. He predicted the war, saw that Italy would abandon the Triple Alliance, held that sea power would be the deciding factor, and that the German Navy would surrender to the British Fleet. In all these forecasts his judgment was sound, and by his statesmanlike grasp of the situation and his eloquent exposition of its requirements on both sides of the Atlantic, he did more than can be readily estimated to make possible the glorious results of the titanic conflict now happily brought to a close as he foreshadowed.

## CHAPTER XXI

### ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

“ Fortunately our differences have been mainly with Great Britain, the great and beneficent coloniser, a State between which and ourselves a sympathy, deeper than both parties have been always ready to admit, has continued to exist, because founded upon common fundamental ideas of law and justice.”—A. T. MAHAN.

IN the volume of articles published in 1897 under the name of *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* will be found one on the subject of Anglo-American reunion, which was written in 1894 at the request of the Editor of the *North American Review*, and in which Mahan summarises in the following words his impression of the international situation as it affects the United States and the British Empire :

“ To Great Britain and the United States, if they rightly estimate the part they may play in the great drama of human progress, is entrusted a maritime interest in the broadest sense of the word, which demands, as one of the conditions of its exercise and its safety, the organised force adequate to control the general course of events at sea ; to maintain, if necessity arises, not arbitrarily, but as those in whom interest and power alike justify the claim to do so, the laws that shall regulate maritime warfare.

“ This is no mere speculation, resting upon a course of specious reasoning, but is based on the teaching of the past. By the exertion of such force and by the maintenance of such laws, and by these means only, Great Britain in the beginning of this century, when she was the solitary power of the seas, saved herself from de-

struction, and powerfully modified for the better the course of history."

Mahan held as a fundamental truth that the water is nature's great medium of communication, and consequently that control of the sea by naval supremacy and maritime commerce gives predominance in the world. He expressed in his habitually candid fashion his views as to the best means of bringing about the Anglo-American reunion he considered so essential to the welfare of the English-speaking peoples of the two hemispheres. He was of those who, in his own words, "hail the growing light, and would hasten gladly the perfect day," but he did not believe in forcing the issue. He did not hold with the advocates<sup>1</sup> of an immediate statesman-made naval alliance, for which he believed the time to be premature.<sup>2</sup> He was convinced that each nation should be gradually educated to realise the length and breadth of its own interest in the sea. As soon as that was accomplished, the identity of these interests would, he felt, become apparent, and the result would be not only advantageous to the United States and Great Britain, but of benefit to the whole world.

He was eager that the two nations should act together in complete accord upon the seas, and greatly desired a change in the mental attitude of his countrymen towards maritime affairs. His efforts in this direction eventually met with success, especially in influential quarters, where, although the numbers be few, the effect is proportionately greater. The culmination was brought about by the war,<sup>3</sup> the incidents of which have already

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Clarke and Mr. Arthur Silva White.

<sup>2</sup> 1894.

<sup>3</sup> "What is our next duty? It is to establish and to maintain bonds of permanent amity with our kinsmen across the Atlantic. Terrible as war may be, even war itself would be cheaply purchased if, in a great and noble cause, the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack should wave together over an Anglo-Saxon alliance."—JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

accomplished wonders in the direction of converting public opinion in America, and the past three years have seen a transformation in the naval and maritime power of the United States so remarkable that even Mahan would have felt satisfied. Thus one of his chief objections to what he considered, in 1894, a one-sided and consequently unstable naval alliance has now been removed.

In the cordial co-operation of the two great Anglo-Saxon naval Powers he saw a pledge of universal peace, in which he was of like mind with those who believe that the Great War might have been averted had it been practicable in 1914 for the United States and Great Britain to have united in a joint declaration to the Central Powers that the moral and material resources of the English-speaking world would be instantly thrown into the scale against any Power which initiated an armed attack upon any other nation. Probably no more subtly delicate problem ever taxed the intellectual resources of a statesman than that which confronted President Wilson during the early stages of the war. But the heaven-sent revelation of the truth which later came to the American people, made April 6, 1917, the most glorious day in the annals of the United States, and gave life and hope to the culminating phase of the world's struggle against military despotism.

The distinguished author and administrator, Sir George Clarke, now Lord Sydenham, who was a good friend of Mahan's and an outspoken critic of his writings, held the opinion that the best hope of attaining to that mutual understanding which he and Mahan so earnestly desired lay in the chance that the Anglo-Saxon race might some day find itself united in the prosecution of a great common object. This the war has brought about. Moreover, it has become the source of a glorious awakening of Anglo-American potentialities, for by reason of the heart-searching exigencies of that world-crisis, England

has found her brains and America has found her soul. England, who had of late become the apostle and victim of *laissez-faire*, was in danger of losing the faculty of constructive administration. It was becoming the fashion to belittle organisation and to mistrust the skilled organiser. A fatal and suicidal pose, were it permitted to survive; because organisation—which in the last analysis is intelligent constructive thought converted into practical effective force—is the automatic machinery which alone can produce worth-while results, the silent irresistible power which transforms small beginnings into great enterprises. Organisation is not a luxury, nor is it a fad. It is the foundation without which no lasting edifice of State or commerce can be erected. The war converted England into a huge storehouse, where the Allies found vast accumulations of every kind of munition of war of the finest quality, the miraculous creation of Britain's awakened capabilities; and when historians summarise the chief incidents of the conflict and connote the more momentous and critical events which mainly contributed to the ultimate result, one of the red-letter days will be that on which David Lloyd George took the reins of government into his fearless hands, and, for the one all-compelling object of winning the war, instantly called to his aid the constructive brains of the Empire.

America, who in recent generations, despite her idealism, has been devoting her energies largely to the making of money, has in a mighty cause poured out her immense resources with such lavish generosity that her President comes forward and says of her people: "They will not fail now to show the world for what their wealth was intended." Can England ever repay America for the prompt, generous, and indispensable financial assistance extended at a highly critical period of 1917? Can America ever repay England for the protection afforded by her Fleet during the first three years of the war? Yes.

Both can do so by co-operating to preserve the future peace of the world.

Of profound significance are these prophetic words of the distinguished President of the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, the Hon. William A. Day :

“ Our country is on the road to a mighty victory—a victory not only over our enemies in the field, but a victory over ourselves. The great war, deplorable and horrible as it is, will make better citizens of us—will elevate our ideals, intensify our devotion to them, and inspire us with a desire to render an ever-enlarging service to humanity.”

Ever since the dramatic opening of hostilities in August 1914, distinguished Americans on both sides of the Atlantic have vigorously and without cessation during the war upheld Great Britain in the most critical period of her history. Such men as James Montgomery Beck and Dr. William Thomas Manning, to name but two, have devoted to the cause of liberty the far-reaching influence of their eloquent voices, and by their never-failing sympathy have placed the British race under a debt of gratitude it is not possible to repay.

America's gift of a million dollars to the British Red Cross touched the innermost chords of English hearts, which were still further warmed and cheered in those sombre days by Major Grayson Murphy's accompanying message :

“ We hope that you will accept our contribution as an earnest of the desire of our people to begin to take our share of the burden of the war which your forces have waged for three years in behalf of the whole civilised world.”

Mahan strikes the keynote of the fundamental unity of interests between England and America when he says :

“ Of all the elements of the civilisation that has spread over Europe and America, none is so potential for good

as that singular combination of two essential but opposing factors of individual freedom with subjection to law which finds its most vigorous working in Great Britain and the United States, its only exponents in which an approach to a due balance has been effected."

He draws attention to the fact that the frontier which stretches for three thousand miles between Canada and the United States is from end to end undefended, and that the Canadian Pacific Railway, which in the event of a conflict between Great Britain and the United States would be the very first and most vulnerable object of attack, is absolutely undefended. Yet without waiting long enough to give England an opportunity to even suggest co-operation, Canada voluntarily sprang to the assistance of the mother-country at the very outbreak of the war and with the unhesitating concurrence of Great Britain denuded her territory of military defenders, thereby contributing a highly significant illustration of the feelings of friendly security existing between the Governments and people of these three countries.<sup>1</sup> Mahan also pointed out that in a topographical sense Canada is a permanent hostage for peace between the United States and the British Empire.

It was in 1823, in the infant days of the American Republic, seventy-four years before Mahan wrote these words and nine years after the treaty signed on Christmas Eve in that old Carthusian convent at Ghent had brought to a termination the last hostilities between England and America, that Canning, the British Foreign Secretary, warned President Monroe of the danger of the Holy Alliance, offered to co-operate with the United States against its intervention in South America, and laid the foundation of the Monroe Doctrine, which some authori-

<sup>1</sup> *Whitaker's Almanack*, which for half a century has been the representative English book of reference, subdivides its information about the various nations of the earth into three distinct headings: (1) British Empire, (2) United States of America, (3) Foreign Countries.

ties have contended should rightly be called the Canning-Monroe Doctrine. Historic are the words in which President Monroe sought and received the advice of the former Presidents, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, in this first momentous "understanding" between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race.<sup>1</sup>

It is a far cry from 1814 to 1914, but motives somewhat similar to those which actuated these three eminent statesmen seem to have influenced red-blooded young Americans a century later to offer their services and their lives to the mother-country in another "epoch" in which Despotism threatened Liberty. This touching letter is from the widow of one of these brave and clear-

<sup>1</sup> "Has not the epoch arrived when Great Britain must take her stand, either on the side of the monarchs of Europe or on the side of the United States, and, in consequence, either in favor of Despotism or of Liberty, and may it not be presumed that, aware of that necessity, her Government has seized on the present occurrence as that which it deems the most suitable to announce and mark the commencement of that career? My own impression is that we ought to meet the proposal of the British Government and to make it known that we would view an interference on the part of the European Powers, and especially an attack on the Colonies, as an attack on ourselves."

Mr. Jefferson replied October 24, 1823: "The question presented by the letters you have sent me is the most momentous which has ever been offered to my contemplation since that of Independence. While Europe is laboring to become the domicile of despotism, our endeavor should surely be to make our hemisphere that of freedom. One nation, most of all, could disturb us in this pursuit. She now offers to lead, aid, and accompany us in it. By acceding to her proposition we detach her from the band, bring her mighty weight into the scale of free government, and emancipate at one stroke a whole continent which might otherwise linger long in doubt and difficulty. Great Britain is the nation which can do us the most harm of any one or all on earth, and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world. With her then we should the most sedulously nourish a cordial friendship, and nothing would tend more to knit our affections than to be fighting once more side by side in the same cause."

Mr. Madison concurred in these words: "With the British power and Navy combined with our own, we have nothing to fear from the rest of the world; and in the great struggle of the epoch between Liberty and Despotism we owe it to ourselves to sustain the former, in this hemisphere at least."

sighted men who have laid down their lives in the deathless cause, and whose memory is enshrined for all time in the grateful heart of England :

“ C. Clive Bayley, Esq.,  
“ British Consul-General,  
“ New York.

“ SIR,

“ I wish to thank you for your expressions of sympathy for me in my trouble. I have received advice from the War Office and regimental officers of the Grenadier Guards that my husband died for the cause of the Allies.

“ I can only say that I am sure he considered it a privilege to give his life for England and her fight, and I am proud that he did his work well.

“ He was among the first Americans to volunteer for your country, enlisting in October 1914, because he had followed so closely events that had happened abroad and foresaw that England was Germany's goal. You will forgive me for mentioning these small personal details when I am sure your time does not permit of such things. I only wish to say that although you have merely lost another private in your ranks, I know that you have lost a man who counted it a privilege to wear your uniform and to give his life for your country.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ FRANCES KENT COOK.

“ RIVERTON, NEW JERSEY,

“ October 16, 1917.”

Such deeds and sentiments, worthy as they are of the noblest traditions of the Anglo-Saxon race, are the links in the chain of Anglo-American relations forged by the wisdom of Madison, Jefferson, and Monroe nearly three-quarters of a century before Mahan's masterly analysis of history bound the two countries still closer together.

Mahan's writings afford many significant illustrations of the extent to which the interests of America in matters of momentous international import are closely bound up with those of Britain, a situation happily recognised by

leading statesmen and naval authorities on both sides of the Atlantic, although as yet but dimly realised by the masses. In *The Problem of Asia* he states that he has been "assured, by an authority in which he entirely trusts, that to a proposition made to Great Britain (at the time of the Spanish-American War) to enter into a combination to constrain the use of our power—as Japan was five years ago constrained by the joint action of Russia, France, and Germany—the reply was not only a refusal to enter into such combination, but an assurance of active resistance to it, if attempted."<sup>1</sup>

In *The Fighting Fleets*, Ralph Paine says :

"Admiral Wemyss resembles Vice-Admiral Sims in the ability to inspire devoted service. Both are men of action with long and varied experience in ships at sea, and both can play the courtier and diplomat when occasion requires. When it comes to discussing naval matters, the First Sea Lord speaks straight from the shoulder, with an abrupt and convincing sincerity.

" 'Tell them when you go home that your Navy is first-class,' he said to me. 'We like your people immensely. I hear it from our Admirals and other officers. There is nothing to be gained by flattery or empty compliments. We are in it together to the finish. And our fleets must work in harmony after this beastly war is over, or God help the civilisation we are fighting to save. To my mind we can't afford to misunderstand each other. All that rubbish should be swept aside.' "

Mahan rejoiced in the unmistakable growth of mutual kindly feelings between Great Britain and the United States during these latter years, and in the following

<sup>1</sup> At Manila the name of Chichester became another imperishable link between the Navies of the two countries. In *The New United States Navy* Mr. Long records that Admiral Dewey used British charts to guide the American warships through the difficult passage of Manila Bay.

words gave proof of his realisation of the strength of sentiment in the adjustment of international affairs :

“ As a matter of sentiment only, this reviving affection well might fix the serious attention of those who watch the growth of world questions, recognising how far imagination and sympathy rule the world ; but when, besides the powerful sentimental impulse, it is remembered that beneath considerable differences of political form there lie a common inherited political tradition and habit of thought, that the moral forces which govern and shape political development are the same in either people, the possibility of a gradual approach to concerted action becomes increasingly striking.”

With comprehensive vision the ever-welcome heir to the British Throne has declared that *only personal contact is needed to prevent misunderstanding between American democracy and our own.*

Mahan emphasised another factor which, in his opinion, must tend to incline the two nations towards a similar course of action in the future. In these words he expounds a great and important truth :

“ Partners, each, in the great commonwealth of nations which share the blessings of European civilisation, they alone, though in varying degrees, are so severed geographically from all existing rivals as to be exempt from the burden of great land armies ; while at the same time they must depend upon the sea, in chief measure, for that intercourse with other members of the body upon which national well-being depends.”

It is quite probable that had Mahan lived a few years longer he would, in view of the momentous changes brought about by the war, have concurred in the following pronouncement made by Mr. Theodore Roosevelt shortly before his death :

“ I regard the British Navy as probably the most potent instrumentality for peace in the world. I do

not believe we should try to build a navy in rivalry to it, but I do believe we should have the second navy in the world. Moreover, I am now prepared to say what five years ago I would not have said. I think the time has come when the United States and the British Empire can agree to a universal arbitration treaty. In other words, I believe that the time has come when we should say that under no circumstances shall there ever be a resort to war between the United States and the British Empire, and that no question can ever arise between them that cannot be settled in judicial fashion, in some such manner as questions between States of our own Union would be settled."

It would be difficult to over-estimate the extent to which the active co-operation of the British and American naval forces as an accomplished fact contributed towards the enemy's decision to capitulate in 1918. In the following letter Admiral Earl Beatty bears witness to the consummation of the hopes entertained by Mahan, that reunion would some day be brought about by the two nations fighting side by side in a common cause :

" H.M.S. ' QUEEN ELIZABETH,'

" *July 12, 1918.*

" DEAR SIR,

" I am interested to hear that you are preparing a biography of Admiral Mahan, the great naval historian of our time. It is opportune that this tribute to his memory should appear at a moment when the Navies of Great Britain and the United States are working in the closest harmony for ideals common to both nations.

" The works of Admiral Mahan gained immediate and world-wide recognition and have had a profound influence. His teachings are of special consequence to the British nation, since the very existence of our Empire must depend in the future, as in the past, on a right

understanding of the paramount importance of Sea Power.

“I am, yours faithfully,

“ DAVID BEATTY,

“ *Admiral.*

“ C. Carlisle Taylor, Esq.”

Reading between the lines of Mahan's private correspondence, the impression may be gained that those on both sides of the Atlantic who have the interests of the two great English-speaking democracies at heart may take courage in the fact that the shrewd common-sense of the silent but amicably disposed nine-tenths of the citizens of the United States will always be sufficient to more than offset the noisy agitation of the disaffected one-tenth.

The late United States Ambassador to Great Britain, Mr. Walter Hines Page, spoke for the people of America in these memorable words :

“ The Sea which separates us becomes smaller as our understanding of each other becomes closer. Our striving together to the utmost for the thing dearest to us both will have the inevitable result of making us brothers for life.”

The good work of the Pilgrims Society and the many similar associations for uniting the English-speaking peoples is already bearing fruit, and the old stupid, moss-grown prejudices are gradually giving place to enlightened appreciation and esteem. Please God, the representative custodians of the happiness and welfare of the peoples of these two dominant nations may in the stimulating sunlight of a hard-won victory over despotism meet each other midway on the broad ocean of sympathy and tolerance, the inevitable offspring of sound common-sense and the mutual desire to learn of one another, and may thus ensure to humanity for all time the priceless gifts of liberty and peace.

Mahan not only taught the wisdom of promoting cordial relations between the people of the United States and Great Britain, but he enforced the lesson that those who do aught by word or deed to estrange these two natural allies are out of touch with the intelligence of the hour and constitute themselves the active enemies of human progress.

## CHAPTER XXII

### MAHAN'S MESSAGE TO HIS COUNTRYMEN

"It is impossible that one who sees in the sea—in the function which it discharges towards the world at large—the most potent factor in national prosperity and in the course of history, should not desire a change in the mental attitude of our countrymen towards maritime affairs. The subject presents itself not merely as one of national importance, but as one concerning the world's history and the welfare of mankind, which are bound up, so far as we can see, in the security and strength of that civilisation which is identified with Europe and its offshoots in America."—A. T. MAHAN.

MAHAN'S writings seem to say to his fellow-Americans, "Read history; study international questions; acquire true historical perspective; learn to realise and appreciate the supreme importance of the sea; insist upon a Navy commensurate with the ever-growing responsibilities of the United States; cultivate friendly relations with Great Britain."

When a national mental condition exists which calls for earnest exhortation on the part of a highly qualified and friendly critic, there must always co-exist some fundamental cause for the prevalence of such a state of mind. In the case of the people of the United States, the source of the indifference towards matters connected with the sea—which unconcern Mahan strove so fervently to dispel—might be summed up in the words *unlimited local markets*. When Emerson defined America as *God's last chance to save the world* he spoke no doubt in the spiritual sense. As such America has not yet fulfilled that destiny; but in a material sense, how true! That which rendered possible America's gigantic contributions to help make the world safe for democracy was *money*; vast accumulations arising from the inexhaustible national resources in precious metals, oil, coal, cotton, and farm produce which mother-

earth has poured into the laps of the fortunate people of this vast continent—of recent years at the almost incredible rate of twenty thousand million dollars every twelve months—and of which they have not failed to take advantage. This immense and never-failing stream of new wealth has gradually created new markets of a capacity hitherto unknown in the world's history: markets which alone have made possible the conditions responsible for the success and prosperity of America's industrious sons and daughters; markets which are the source and foundation of the crowning gift of America, *boundless opportunity*, which not only attracts millions to her shores, but is enhanced a thousand-fold by the invigorating atmosphere with which nature has blessed this highly favoured land.

It can readily be imagined that in such a huge continent as that of America, the average citizen, who has never seen the sea and seldom hears of it, and who finds the markets of his own and forty other conveniently adjacent States more than he can well supply, is little likely to turn his thoughts towards maritime affairs and foreign marts. The necessities of Europe during the war revolutionised this condition of affairs, and America, with eyes turned towards the sea, became the colossal exporter and owner of ships.

Sometimes a concrete illustration is more illuminative than pages of explanation. Here is a letter which, read between the lines, is eloquent of the unfamiliarity with maritime affairs which obtained a few years ago, even among those in high places :

“ ‘THE OUTLOOK,’  
“ 287, FOURTH AVENUE,  
“ NEW YORK,  
“ June 27, 1911.

“ MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAHAN,

“ You are entirely right. The flying squadron was looked upon with hysterical anxiety by the North-

east and its representatives in Congress as a protection against a Spanish attack ! If you can get in to see me, or motor over to take lunch with me at Oyster Bay, I should really like to tell you about some of the requests made to me for ships to protect Portland, Maine, Jekyl Island, Narragansett Pier, and other points of like vast strategic importance ! Hale and Tom Reed actually made the President say that he would send a ship to Portland. I arranged to send them a Civil War monitor with twenty-one New Jersey Naval Militia aboard, which satisfied Portland entirely ! It would have been useless against any war vessel more modern than one of Hamilkar's galleys.

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ THEODORE ROOSEVELT.”

“ Captain A. T. Mahan,

“ Marshmere,

“ Quogue, L.I.”

It was a many-sided message that Mahan bequeathed to his countrymen. He taught that as world-conditions change, national policies must be correspondingly adjusted. A principle of international policy which was appropriate in 1800 may well be useless or injurious in 1900. The incidents of four years of war have done more to vindicate his contentions than a century of peace. In speaking of a possible future world-wide conflict he said :

“ In this same pregnant strife the United States doubtless will be led, by undeniable interests and aroused national sympathies, to play a part, to cast aside the policy of isolation which befitted her infancy, and to recognise that, whereas once to avoid European entanglements was essential to the development of her individuality, now to take her share of the travail of Europe is but to assume an inevitable task, an appointed lot, in the work of upholding the common interests of civilisation.”

With relentless logic he demonstrated that the day has now come when the United States must accept the

responsibilities of her great and unique position and take her rightful place among the nations of the earth. He eloquently entreated his countrymen to *look outwards* and to build an adequate navy and merchant marine, and thereby recover their fair share in the power and emoluments which the sea alone can yield.

Mahan's writings abound in the recital of historic events which appeal for intelligent and impartial readjustment of perspective on the part of his countrymen in connection with the history of their beloved land. These lessons involved the telling of some very plain truths, a few possibly not altogether acceptable to time-honoured conceptions of various incidents of American history as taught in the schools or handed down by tradition. Mahan's historical narrative is so accurate and so conclusive that it could hardly fail to furnish some adjustment of popular impressions, or to emphasise the significance of many recorded facts to which little or no importance has commonly been attached in the minds of the general public in America.

To mention but two as illustrative of the many to be found within his pages. He records that, contrary to the generally accepted idea, the determining military factor in the War of Independence—as distinct from the moral influence of Washington's superb character—was the French Navy. He explains that the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown was brought about by the blockade maintained by the French Admiral de Grasse, and made possible by the superior strength of the Spanish and French Fleets over that of England. He further reminds his readers that Washington fully realised this, and openly acknowledged it in his letters to Lafayette and Rochambeau, some of which he quotes and of which these extracts are examples :

“In any operation, and under all circumstances, a decisive naval superiority is to be considered as a

fundamental principle, and the basis upon which every hope of success must ultimately depend."

"You will have observed that, whatever efforts are made by the land armies, the Navy must have the casting vote in the present contest."

"If France delays a timely and powerful aid in the critical posture of our affairs, it will avail us nothing, should she attempt it hereafter. Why need I run into detail, when it may be declared in a word that we are at the end of our tether, and that now or never our deliverance must come."

Mahan recounts that this blockade was the only instance in which de Grasse conducted any notably successful operation at sea. Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781. The very day before, October 18, British naval forces, after a fatal delay, were ready to sail to his relief, but he had capitulated before they could reach the scene of action. Mahan says :

"Having regard to the character of de Grasse, it is reasonable to believe that, if he had found the British Fleet thus drawn up at anchor in Chesapeake Bay, as he found Hood at St. Kitts in the following January, he would have waited off the entrance for de Barras, and then have gone to sea, leaving Washington and Rochambeau to look at Cornwallis slipping out of their grasp."

Mahan sums up the situation in these words :

"During the four years that followed, until the surrender of Yorktown, the scales rose and fell as the one navy or the other appeared on the scene, or as English commanders kept touch with the sea or pushed their operations far from its support. Finally, at the great crisis, all is found depending upon the question whether the French or the English Fleet should first appear, and upon their relative force.

"Will it be too much for American pride to admit

that, had France refused to contest the control of the sea with England, the latter would have been able to reduce the Atlantic seaboard? Let us not kick down the ladder by which we mounted, nor refuse to acknowledge what our fathers felt in their hour of trial.

“The defeat of Graves and subsequent surrender of Cornwallis did not end the naval operations in the Western hemisphere. On the contrary, one of the most interesting tactical feats and the most brilliant victory of the whole war were yet to grace the English flag in the West Indies<sup>1</sup>; but with the events at Yorktown the patriotic interest for Americans closes.<sup>2</sup> Before quitting that struggle for independence it must again be affirmed that its successful ending, at least at so early a date, was due to the control of the sea—to sea power in the hands of the French and its improper distribution by the English authorities.”

As touching the political motive of the French Government of that day, Mahan frankly lays before his countrymen the historical fact that France lent her aid rather from a desire to injure England than out of sympathy for the Colonists; that both Spain and France had as their objective the crippling of England and the acquisition of territory in the Mediterranean and in the East and West Indies. In this their hopes were doomed to failure, for within a few months of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown the British Navy won the great victory over the French which resulted in the capture of de Grasse, who had promised Washington naval support in the following year's campaign; and England emerged from the contest strong enough to record within a few years the glorious achievements of which Nelson and the younger Pitt were the master-spirits.

<sup>1</sup> Known as the “Battle of the Saints.” De Grasse was captured, and upon his release returned to France, where he was court-martialled and retired from active service.—C. C. T.

<sup>2</sup> Washington did not by any means regard the struggle as ended. See his letters to Lafayette and de Grasse.—C. C. T.

The following passage in *From Sail to Steam* sums up Mahan's estimate of the younger Pitt :

" Pitt was not a general nor an admiral, nor does he appear so to have considered himself ; but he realised perfectly where Great Britain's strength lay, and where the sphere of her efforts. By that understanding he guided her movements ; and, in the final triumph, wrought by the spirit of the British nation over the spirit of the French Revolution, the greatest share cannot justly be denied to the chief who, in the long struggle against wind and tide, forced often to swerve from the direct course he would have followed by unforeseen dangers that arose around the ship in her passage through unknown seas, never forgot the goal, ' security,' upon which from the first his will was set. Fit, indeed, it was that he should drop at his post just when Trafalgar had been won and Austerlitz lost. That striking contrast of substantial and, in fact, decisive success, with bewildering but evanescent disaster, symbolised well his troubled career as it superficially appears.

" As the helm escaped his dying hands, all seemed lost, but in truth the worst was passed—' the pilot had weathered the storm.' "

A second illustration concerns the War of 1812, of which Mahan records that—

" Owing to the vast inferiority of American naval strength, the completeness of the blockade of the American coasts produced an exhaustion of means in the midst of plenty, a financial catastrophe which compelled peace without obtaining the formal concession of any one of the points for which the nation went to war."

And he thus summarises the ineffectiveness of single ship combats :

" The War of 1812 demonstrated the usefulness of a Navy, not, indeed, by the admirable but utterly un-availing single-ship victories that illustrated its course,

but by the prostration into which our seaboard and external communications fell, through the lack of a Navy at all proportionate to the country's needs and exposure. The Navy doubtless reaped honor in that brilliant sea-struggle, but the honor was its own alone; only discredit accrued to the statesmen who, with such men to serve them, none the less left the country open to the humiliation of its harried coasts and blasted commerce. Never was there a more lustrous example of what Jomini calls 'the sterile glory of fighting battles merely to win them.' Except for the prestige which at last awoke the country to the high efficiency of the petty force we called our Navy, and showed what the sea might be to us, never was blood spilled more uselessly than in the frigate and sloop actions of that day.<sup>1</sup> They presented no analogy to the outpost and reconnaissance fighting, to the detached services, that are not only inevitable, but invaluable in maintaining the *moral* of a military organisation in campaign. They were simply scattered efforts, without relation either to one another or to any main body whatsoever, capable of affecting seriously the issues

<sup>1</sup> "The lesson of the War of 1812 should be learned by Englishmen of the present day, when a long naval peace has generated a confidence in numerical superiority, in the mere possession of heavier *matériel*, and in the merits of a rigidly uniform system of training, such confidence, as experience has shown, being often the forerunner of misfortune. It is neither patriotic nor intelligent to minimise the American successes. Certainly they have been exaggerated by the Americans, and even by the British. To take the frigate actions alone as being those which properly attracted most attention, the captures in action amounted to three on each side, the proportionate loss to the Americans, considering the smallness of their fleet, being immensely greater than to the British. We also see that no British frigate was taken after the first seven months of a war which lasted two and a half years. Attempts have been made to spread a belief that British reverses were due to nothing but the greater size and heavier guns of the enemy's ships. It is now established that the superiority in these details, which the Americans certainly enjoyed, was not great and not of itself enough to account for these victories. In the words of Admiral Jurien de la Gravière: 'The ships of the United States constantly fought with the chances in their favour.' All this is indisputable. Nevertheless in any future war British sea power, great as it may be, should not receive shocks like those that it unquestionably did suffer in 1812." —ADMIRAL SIR CYPRIAN BRIDGE, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xxiv.

of war, or, indeed, to any plan of operations worthy of the name."

In the chapters on *Freedom of the Seas* and *Peace Views* will be found messages of profound and far-reaching significance to the people of the United States. In *From Sail to Steam* Mahan said :

"It involves getting rid of old ideas, which is quite as bad as pulling teeth, and much harder; and the subsequent adoption of new ones, that are as uneasy as tight shoes. We had then certain accepted maxims, dating mainly from 1812, which were as thoroughly current in the country—and I fear in the Navy, too—as the 'dollar of the daddies' was not long after. One was that commerce destroying was the great efficient weapon of naval warfare. Everybody—the Navy as well—believed we had beaten Great Britain in 1812, brought her to her knees, by the destruction of her commerce through the system observed by us of single cruisers, naval or privateers. From that erroneous premise was deduced the conclusion of a Navy of cruisers, and small cruisers at that; no battleship nor fleets. Then we wanted a Navy for coast defence only, no aggressive action in our pious souls, an amusing instance being that our first battleships were styled 'coast defence' battleships, a nomenclature which probably facilitated the appropriations. They were that; but they were capable of better things, as the event has proved."

To this he appended the following footnote :

"This is not the place for a discussion of commerce-destroying as a method of war; but having myself given, as I believe, historical demonstration that as a sole or principal resource, maintained by scattered cruisers only, it is insufficient, I wish to warn public opinion against the reaction, the return swing of the pendulum, seen by me with dismay, which would make it of no use at all, and under the plea of immunity to 'private

property,' so called, would exempt from attack the maritime commerce of belligerents."

Such messages of his are clarion calls for the exercise of true historic perspective and for intelligent up-to-date appreciation of modern naval conditions and requirements.

Mahan's intimate knowledge and understanding of the broad lines of English policy enabled him to demonstrate to his countrymen that first judgments, based on incomplete or incorrect information, are apt to be unjust to the old country, and that he is a prudent statesman who, refusing to judge by appearances or to be swayed by popular clamour, exhaustively investigates in the light of international law and precedent any action or motive of Great Britain before pronouncing judgment or taking action. A recent illustration occurs in the scholarly and impartial exposition of one of America's foremost authorities on international law, Dr. James Brown Scott, in his *Survey of International Relations between the United States and Germany, August 1, 1914, to April 6, 1917*. In a review of this remarkable work in the *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, Professor H. C. Washburn, of the Naval Academy, in referring to the differences of opinion which not unnaturally arose between the British and American Governments in connection with various phases of the British naval blockade during the early stages of the war, says :

"In view of policies put in force by the United States since its entry into the war, conflicts between American and British opinion, now seen in retrospect, with all the evidence and law reviewed, give two clear impressions, that in every important discussion the British Government found decisions of the United States Supreme Court to warrant the principles if not the details of international law upon which Great Britain has acted.

"In justice to both the British and the American Governments, it should now be realised that the former

was, under the circumstances, more than fair in its application of principles, that the latter was more than strict, and that the concrete result was a situation lasting over two years which tended to injure the rightful interests of Great Britain, and also to increase the burden of war, to which the United States later became committed.

“ If there is anything for Americans to regret in the whole record, it is the cases in which our Government made strong objection to British policies which we have since not only carried out ourselves, but exceeded in practical completeness.”

In this comprehensive summary Mahan gives us one of his characteristic examples of historical perspective :

“ To the citizen of the United States, the war whose results were summed up and sealed in the Treaty of Versailles is a landmark of history surpassing all others in interest and importance. His sympathies are stirred by the sufferings of the many, his pride animated by the noble constancy of the few whose names will be for ever identified with the birth-throes of his country. Yet in a less degree this feeling may well be shared by a native of Western Europe, though he have not the same vivid impression of the strife, which, in so distant a land and on so small a scale, brought a new nation to life. This indeed was the great outcome of the war ; but in its progress, Europe, India, and the Sea had been the scenes of deeds of arms far more dazzling and at times much nearer home than the obscure contest in America. In dramatic effect nothing has exceeded the three-years siege of Gibraltar, teeming as it did with exciting interest, fluctuating hopes and fears, triumphant expectation and bitter disappointment. England from her shores saw gathered in the Channel sixty-six French and Spanish ships-of-the-line—a force larger than had ever threatened her since the days of the Great Armada, and before which her inferior numbers had to fly, for the first time, to the shelter of her ports. Rodney and Suffren had conducted sea-campaigns, fought sea-fights, and won sea-victories which stirred beyond the common the

hearts of men in their day, and which still stand conspicuous in the story of either Navy. In one respect above all this war was distinguished—in the development, on both sides, of naval power. Never since the Peace of Versailles to our own day has there been such an approach to equality between the parties to a sea-war.”

In an article for a boys’ magazine Mahan relates in the simple language of personal narrative the following incident, which has a human touch, and aptly reflects the conciliatory nature of the relations which may exist between honourable commanders of opposing armies even in such a momentous struggle :

“Ten years after the surrender of Yorktown, when George Washington was the first President of the United States, a young English gentleman sailed from Calcutta, in India, of which Cornwallis was then Governor-General—much the same as President. He was going to Philadelphia, and Cornwallis, to whom he was known, gave him a letter to President Washington, at the same time charging him to say how highly he esteemed him and his character. The young Englishman accordingly called on Washington, who was living in Market Street, Philadelphia ; Philadelphia being then the seat of Government of the United States, as the city of Washington now is. The President came in with his wife, and when the visitor delivered his message replied that he also had a great admiration for Lord Cornwallis. This incident of two ancient antagonists exchanging personal compliments and kindly appreciation, from such opposite quarters of the globe as New York and Calcutta, is a pleasant conclusion to the story of the surrender ; which to one was a memorable triumph and to the other the great misfortune of a distinguished career.”

In imparting to his countrymen in so impressive a manner the fruits of his exhaustive investigation of the early history of the United States, Mahan called attention to the prejudicial character of the versions upon

which young America is wont to be fed. No little progress has already been made in revising American school books, but much remains to be done, and no task can be undertaken that is of such paramount importance to the promotion of friendly relations between America and Britain in days to come.<sup>1</sup>

The following obituary notice from the *New York Press* appreciatively epitomises Mahan's chief message to his countrymen :

"Admiral Mahan was never more needed by his country than when he died yesterday. Always a deep student of naval strategy and for years a world authority on sea power, his illuminations of the lessons to be drawn from the great war in Europe, had he lived beyond its end, would have been for the American people priceless.

"As it was, Admiral Mahan lived through enough days of this unparalleled conflict to see his judgment perfectly vindicated as to England's recompense for maintaining through the generations superlative war fleets giving her the command of all the ocean.

"It has come to pass, as he always held it must, that, with the Old World convulsed by war, races plunged into slaughter and countries given over to devastation, Britons, guarded by their floating fortresses, live at home as securely and traffic with the world as freely in war as in peace.

"No man ever gave Englishmen a deeper realisation of the destiny held for them in fleets invincible than this simple, modest American, with his vision of genius, lucidity of thought, and eloquence of words.

"But what he taught Englishmen as to their sea power, he strove to make as clear and inspiring a lesson to his own Americans. With the war storming over the Old World, his countrymen are awakening to the truths that he told them many times and over again. With his life gone, but his shining memory remaining, they

<sup>1</sup> According to Mr. Charles Altschul's published analysis, a majority of the elementary schools of America still make use of history textbooks which create deplorably unjust impressions of Great Britain and sow seeds of bitterness and suspicion in the young.

may act upon those truths, as England was ever doing, to her safety and honor now.

“And let no American ever forget the text he gave us upon our Monroe Doctrine, so cherished by the people of the United States—that this great principle, imperative to the safety and welfare of all the nations of the New World, shall always be as strong as the sea power of the United States, ready to enforce it, but must be as weak as that sea power unprepared, not one whit more, not one whit less.”

An especially impressive lesson—or rather series of lessons, historical, strategical, and topographical—is conveyed by the following commentary on the influence of sea power in the American Civil War:

“As regards the development of sea power, it is not the total number of square miles which a country contains, but the length of its coast-line and the character of its harbors that are to be considered. As to these, it is to be said that, the geographical and physical conditions being the same, extent of sea-coast is a source of strength or weakness according as the population is large or small. A country is in this like a fortress; the garrison must be proportioned to the enceinte. A recent familiar instance is found in the American War of Secession. Had the South had a people as numerous as it was warlike, and a Navy commensurate to its other resources as a sea power, the great extent of its sea-coast and its numerous inlets would have been elements of great strength. The people of the United States and the Government of that day justly prided themselves on the effectiveness of the blockade of the whole Southern coast. It was a great feat, a very great feat; but it would have been an impossible feat had the Southerners been more numerous, and a nation of seamen. What was there shown was not, as has been said, how such a blockade can be maintained, but that such a blockade is possible in the face of a population not only unused to the sea, but also scanty in numbers. Those who recall how the blockade was maintained, and the class of ships that blockaded during great part of the war, know

that the plan, correct under the circumstances, could not have been carried out in the face of a real Navy. Scattered unsupported along the coast, the United States ships kept their places, singly or in small detachments, in face of an extensive network of inland water communications which favored secret concentration of the enemy. Behind the first line of water communications were long estuaries, and here and there strong fortresses, upon either of which the enemy's ships could always fall back to elude pursuit or to receive protection. Had there been a Southern Navy to profit by such advantage, or by the scattered condition of the United States ships, the latter could not have been distributed as they were; and being forced to concentrate for mutual support, many small but useful approaches would have been left open to commerce. But as the Southern coast, from its extent and many inlets, might have been a source of strength, so, from those very characteristics, it became a fruitful source of injury. The great story of the opening of the Mississippi is but the most striking illustration of an action that was going on incessantly all over the South. At every breach of the sea frontier, war-ships were entering. The streams that had carried the wealth and supported the trade of the seceding States turned against them, and admitted their enemies to their hearts. Dismay, insecurity, paralysis, prevailed in regions that might, under happier auspices, have kept a nation alive through the most exhausting war. Never did sea power play a greater or a more decisive part than in the contest which determined that the course of the world's history would be modified by the existence of one great nation, instead of several rival States, in the North American continent. But while just pride is felt in the well-earned glory of those days, and the greatness of the results due to naval preponderance is admitted, Americans who understand the facts should never fail to remind the over-confidence of their countrymen that the South not only had no Navy, not only was not a seafaring people, but that also its population was not proportioned to the extent of the sea-coast which it had to defend." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 43.

The epitome of Mahan's innumerable messages to his countrymen on the necessity for an adequate Navy is aptly reflected in his pronouncement that "every danger of a military character to which the United States is exposed can be met best outside her own territory—at sea. Preparedness for naval war—preparedness against naval attack and for naval offence—is preparedness for anything that is likely to occur." He declared himself emphatically in favour of a Navy "second to none but that of Great Britain, to rival which is inexpedient, because for many reasons unnecessary."

He was eager for active preparedness. He was earnestly desirous that his countrymen should realise how indispensable to the national welfare was the immediate execution of well-considered measures for naval defence. This volume will not have been written in vain if it does nothing more than incite some of Mahan's fellow-countrymen, who have not already done so, to read the wondrous messages he sent them. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, his masterpieces "should be studied with especial care by all Americans who desire to know what the real interest of their country demands in the way of thought and action from her sons and daughters."

In a letter to Mrs. Mahan, Mr. Henry White, one of the United States delegates to the Peace Conference in Paris, paid this tribute to his friend :

"Admiral Mahan's death is a great shock and a real sorrow to me. Not only had I a great admiration for his character and ability, but I have always felt grateful to him for the inestimable services which he has rendered to our country through his wonderful books. And, moreover, I was sincerely attached to him personally and delighted in exchanging views with him and obtaining the benefit of his wise counsel on public affairs.

"It is a cruel disappointment to me to feel that I shall not now be able to enjoy the many talks with him

to which I was greatly looking forward this winter, and that I shall never again hear the sound of his sympathetic voice."

Mahan's life teaches us all a great lesson. He did not avail himself of the lucrative opportunities of business or politics or one of the learned professions. He enjoyed none of the advantages of capital or influence. He was not as a youth subjected to that early apprenticeship in the school of money-making which the younger generation is apt to regard as essential to success in life. He was modest and reserved and unassuming. He lacked those traits of aggressive smartness which are usually associated with worldly advancement. Financially he made no more than a competency. Yet he reached the topmost rung in the ladder of international fame and became one of the most eminent Americans of his day and generation. He achieved things really worth while, and won the admiration of the best minds in all countries. He was a public benefactor, and rendered not only to his own countrymen, but to all humanity, a service so immense that it can never be repaid.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### LITERARY TRAITS

"I not only immensely admired the Admiral, but regarded him as one of the greatest and most useful influences in American life. He was one of those few men who leave a permanent mark on history and literature, aside from their profound and far-reaching influence on contemporary thought. He was a great man and a very good man and good citizen."—THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

ANALYSIS of his chief works would seem to suggest lucidity and accuracy as the two predominating characteristics of Mahan's style. A desire to be accurate in facts and conclusions was the besetting anxiety of his soul, and he was nervously susceptible of being convicted of a mistake. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there is hardly a sentence of any moment in his principal works which has not been the subject of consideration, and of revision, until the best possible construction of which he was capable, and the most appropriate language he could command were assured.

He believed in Samuel Johnson's advice, diligently to set down thoughts as they arise in the first words in which they occur, and later to formulate and embellish as required. He has left on record these inspiring and reassuring words :

"I got much comfort from Darwin's complaint of frequent recurrences of inability to give adequate expression to thoughts, which he could then put down only in such crude, imperfect form as the moment suggested, leaving the task of elaboration to a more propitious season. If so great a man was thus troubled, no strange

thing was happening to me in a like experience. Such good cheer in intellectual as well as moral effort is one of the best services of biography and history, raising to the rank of ministering spirits the men whose struggles and success they tell."

Mahan did not consciously imitate the style of other writers,<sup>1</sup> although he frankly admits to unrestrained plagiarism of apt expressions. A curious sidelight is thrown upon his early literary prepossessions by the fact that he had to force himself to read Shakespeare before he eventually succumbed to the irresistible charm of that matchless mind. Another proof of the possession of that fund of common sense which so often happily intervened to rescue him from the narrowing influences of his younger days.

He no doubt owed much of the clearness of his style to a natural and hearty agreement with Robert Louis Stevenson's opinion that everything depends upon the order of the words, and that the sentence should be like a legal statute, as nearly as possible independent of punctuation. He was intensely averse to reading anything he could not readily understand, and this no doubt added strength to his obsession for uninvolved writing, which may have justified in a measure an occasional

<sup>1</sup> "As I progressed, I worked out a theory for myself, just as I had the theory of the influence of sea power. Style, I said, has two sides. It is first and above all the expression of a man's personality, as characteristic as any other trait; or, as some one has said—was it Buffon?—style is the man himself. From this point of view it is susceptible of training, of development, or of pruning; but to attempt to pattern it on that of another person is a mistake. For one chance of success there are a dozen of failure; for you are trying to raise a special product from a soil probably uncongenial, or a fruit from an alien stem—figs from vines. But beyond this there is to style an artificial element, which I conceive to be indicated by the word technique as applied to the arts; though it is possible that I misapprehend the term, being ignorant of art. In authorship I understand by technique mainly the correct construction of periods by the proper collocation of their parts."—*From Sail to Steam*.

criticism for diffuseness to which portions of his writings have been subjected. As he says himself :

“ It is to this anxiety for full and accurate development of statements and ideas that I chiefly attribute a diffuseness with which my writing has been reproached ; I have no doubt justly. I have not however tried to check the evil at the root. I am built that way, and think that way ; all around a subject, as far as I can see it. I am uneasy if a presentment err by defect, by excess, or by obscurity apparent to myself. I must get the whole in, and for due emphasis am very probably redundant. I am not willing to attempt seriously modifying my natural style, the reflection of myself, lest, while digging up the tares of prolixity, I root up also the wheat of precision.”

He exercised the privilege of an author to coin and resuscitate words, and among others he has contributed *manywhere*, *eventless*, and *forbiddal* ; and has made use of *thitherto*, *desperateness*, *ex-centric*, *immediateness*, *dis-admire* and *selfsufficingness*. He admitted an abhorrence of the split infinitive : this as a matter of taste, as he confessed to a temptation to snuggle the adverb close to the verb. Some authors appear indifferent to the repetition of the same word in the same paragraph, but Mahan was not of their number.

His plan was to write for several hours in the morning. He did not write in the afternoon nor in the evening. The hours after the mid-day meal were devoted to reading, to exercise, and to his family. His habit of carefully conserving his note-books makes it possible to record that he wrote a good hand, and that what he put down was legible, which greatly lessened the task of Mrs. Mahan, who transcribed his MSS. into typewriting, in which form they were submitted to the publishers.

His correspondence, note-books, and MSS. also show him to have been a remarkably easy, prolific, and fluent writer. During his absences abroad he would write

interesting and descriptive letters, not only to Mrs. Mahan, but to both his daughters and to his son, recording his doings and his impressions of the people he met and the places he visited. Extracts from some of these letters are quoted in other parts of this work. On the literary side the correspondence shows him to have been an admirer of good poetry, having a partiality for William Sharp's *Sonnets of this Century*; his favourites being Matthew Arnold's "East London" and Herbert Clarke's "The Assignation." He expresses a horror of Zola's works, and asks his daughter not to read any of them. He constantly refers to Boswell's *Johnson*, which he evidently enjoyed immensely. The following extract from one of his letters quaintly reveals his natural diffidence and his well-bred self-possession in society :

"As regards embarrassment, I have never seemed to realise, even with the Queen, that I was speaking to other than a lady who was entitled to certain forms of respect. All that kind of self-possession seems so unnatural to me that I don't understand it; for I think you know I inherit father's disposition to withdraw into the background—and indeed I do so. I think the British flunkey comes much nearer overwhelming me than the biggest lord in the puddle. The look of calm surprise that can evolve from their faces, e.g. if you take a wrong direction, is extraordinary, and particularly as they effect it without moving a muscle or winking an eyelash. I own I think them the most formidable members of British Society."

In another place he admits that shunning people had been the greatest error of his life. He tells his family of a complimentary allusion to him in O'Connor Morris's *Life of Napoleon* :

"My friend O'Connor Morris in his last letter to me asked that I would read his *Life of Napoleon* and give him my candid opinion about it—a rather delicate

request. However, I bought the book—a dollar—and have nearly finished it, and happily can write a complimentary opinion. In the closing paragraph of the preface he gives me a send-off which I copy for your benefit: ‘After these sheets had been corrected for the press, I have had an opportunity of reading the second part of Capt. Mahan’s admirable work on Sea Power. I have made no changes in my text; but it is gratifying to me to find that my views as regards Napoleon’s projects of a descent on England and the operations which ended at Trafalgar, and as regards the Continental System, coincide with those of a writer who is not only the first living authority on naval warfare, but also possesses remarkable political insight.’ ”

In one letter, when he was well on in years, he complained that he had to some extent lost his old capacity for instantly and unerringly selecting the right word.

His innumerable note-books of historical facts are written with the care and precision which characterise all his work. The stupendous character of his historical researches is disclosed in these tangible evidences of the years of study and application he devoted to them.

Here is a specimen of Mahan’s genius for interpreting facts of history and setting them down in clear and convincing language. It is from *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*:

“Matters had at last reached the crisis to which they had been tending for years. Louis XIV and William of Orange, long-standing enemies, and at the moment the two chief figures in European politics, alike for their strong personalities and the cause which either represented, stood on the brink of great actions, whose effects were to be felt through many generations. William, despotic in temper himself, stood on the shores of Holland looking hopefully towards free England, from which he was separated by the narrow belt of water that was the defense of the island kingdom, and might yet be an impassable barrier to his own high aims, for the

French King at that moment could control the sea if he would. Louis, holding all the power of France in his single grasp, facing eastward as before, saw the Continent gathering against him; while on his flank was England, heartily hostile, longing to enter on the strife against him, but as yet without a leader. It still remained with him to decide whether he would leave the road open for the head to join the waiting body, and to bring Holland and England, the two sea powers, under one rule. If he attacked Holland by land, and sent his superior Navy into the Channel, he might well keep William in his own country, the more so as the English Navy, beloved and petted by the King, was likely to have more than the usual loyalty of seamen to their chief. Faithful to the bias of his life, perhaps unable to free himself from it, he turned towards the Continent, and September 24, 1688, he declared war against Germany, and moved his armies towards the Rhine. William, overjoyed, saw removed the last obstacle to his ambition."

What a masterful combination of condensed, unaffected, yet vigorous descriptive writing and rare insight into the lessons of history! It was no doubt partly owing to an indefinable charm in his mode of literary treatment that Mahan was able to command one hundred and fifty dollars, and in some cases as much as five hundred dollars, for a single magazine article.

As might be expected from his upbringing, Mahan was a purist in language. Even when he used a colloquialism he was wont to add "as they say," or some such half-apologetic qualification. He never condescended to slang of any sort, either in his speech or in his writings, and he was of those patriots who hope that as one of the happy results of the English and American comradeship in arms, the good American citizen will chase from the camp for all time the objectionable foreign mongrel *yeah*, and insist upon the use of the genuine English word *yes* when the intention is to express assent.

His style, for which he received unstinted praise from the critics, owed much to his upright character, his scrupulous honesty of purpose, his high sense of duty, and his deep regard for truth and accuracy. These characteristics shine forth in his pages from cover to cover, and go far to stamp his chief works as classics. Buffon could hardly have had a better illustration of the truth of his maxim that style "is the man himself," for style is an indefinable something for which the environment of early youth is largely responsible, being in part an auditory inheritance from our parents' habitual mode of speech. Some of its attributes, like the tone of the voice, the look in the eyes, the expression of the mouth, are no doubt transmitted directly through the medium of that well-nigh invisible miracle for good and evil, the human germ cell; and for much of the rest, character and the quality of the brain are together responsible. But speaking broadly, style is a gift.

Mr. Austin Taylor, President of the Philomathic Society of Liverpool, has left this on record :

"The appearance of true literary genius is always something of a phenomenon, but when this genius happens to reside in a naval officer our wonder is proportionately increased.

"When certain books appeared from the pen of Pierre Loti of a strangely tender sensibility, the evident product of a genius to whom the minor chords in nature powerfully appealed, curiosity was stimulated rather than satisfied by the discovery that their author was a young officer of the French Navy. It had never occurred to anyone that this profession could produce authors of the first literary genius.

"Scarcely had the reading public recovered from this blow when it received from the Western hemisphere a similar shock. An historical genius suddenly disclosed himself who, treating of the minutiae of his own profession with perfect accuracy, yet displayed at the same time a profound acquaintance with the issues which underlie national destiny.

“It is not every day that the waves of the ocean cast up at our feet pearls of such exceeding price.”

A facsimile of Mahan's first literary effort is reproduced in this chapter. He was seven years old at the time, and his comment on Jonah gives evidence of an early taste for analytical writing. His style shows some improvement in his next effort, which reflects the American boy's traditional love of noise. Here it is :

“June 24, 1848.

“DEAR MOTHER,

“I want you to bring me up some fireworks for fourth of july. viz. one triangle Romoncandles flower pots chasers spinningwheels rockets fireballs and firecrackers, you may get anything else that you please. The codets went into camp to-day. Tomy McD—— went down to New York today so that the little carriage you sent him we could not give him so Fredy plays with it. I want some sugarplums for Mamey and some firecrackers. I should be glad to hear how Uncle john and Anty jane and Anty Whity and Grandma are. Kiss grandma for me please. Your affectionate son

“ALFRED T. MAHAN.”

He was eight years old when he presented these fiery demands.

Half a century later, in a review of Mahan's *Life of Nelson*, *The Spectator* says :

“This is a book which is so great—great in so many ways—that as one closes it one almost fears to review, lest one should be tempted to use language that will rather mar the effect which its own charm and its own power ought to exercise on the independent mind of every reader. What we should like to do is simply to convince everyone that they ought to read it for themselves, with no fears that they will not be able to understand every line of it, and that they should then freely form their own judgment upon it.

“That Captain Mahan is able to write of naval war-

West Point

Dear Grandmother  
in my first <sup>little first</sup> letter I must enquire  
is about Cousin Molly Aunty Jane  
Uncle John and yourself. Your looks  
I enjoyed very much especially  
Aunties. I liked the tent on the plain,  
Aunties or the whole armour of God,  
the story of Jonah teaches me that man  
cannot fly from God. Forleys animals  
is very interesting I also want to know  
how Uncle John and all the persons  
in small Mother got home at half  
past Ten o'clock. Before ending my  
letter I think I ought to ask you to tell  
me when you are coming up to West  
Point. Many and I send a kiss  
to Molly. I want to know how Auntie Whitty  
is and now Dear grandmother I  
must bid you goodbye your affectionate  
~~grandson~~ grandson A. M.

gm, gm

MAHAN'S FIRST LETTER, AGE 7.



fare in such a style, and with such clearness as to make it easily intelligible to every landsman, is well-known to all those who have read his fascinating volumes on *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*.

“He has an almost Shakespearian tendency to drop as he goes along wise reflections, pithy sentences, gnomæ, many of which are, apart from their context, of almost universal application in the affairs of life. Often they are highly polished, always wholesome, and not infrequently very weighty.”

Another point of view is expressed in an illustrated article by Francis W. Halsey in the Literary Supplement of *The New York Times*. It is well worth quoting. This is what he says :

“The most interesting thing about Captain Mahan’s books is something which the books do not tell us—the answer to this question : How he, a naval officer, took to literature and acquitted himself in that field of action with so much honor. One fact we may assume : He has read great authors and learned to know what good historical writing consists of. If he has not spent his days and nights with Addison he has spent them with other masters of English. He has made no man’s style his own, but he has conformed to certain fundamental qualities of which all good writing consists—clearness, personality, variety, charm.

“Style unquestionably is the man, but a man may not have style in prose without education and experience ; he may not have it without knowing what it is, and he cannot master it until he has long practiced it. The question remains unanswered, except in so far as a partial answer is found in character.

“In not a few cases the men have seemed greater than their works, their works only a partial manifestation of their qualities. This remains true of Captain Mahan. All through his writings is writ large the man. Conscience is dominant. Here are seen laborious search for truth, restraint in utterance, the repose of conscious strength ; now the vigour of power, now the silence of power.”

While critics on both sides of the Atlantic were giving expression to gratifying tributes to his literary accomplishments, how did Mahan himself regard his success? Luckily we have in his private correspondence some interesting evidence on this point. Writing to his family in 1895 he says :

“ Well, how do I feel about it all? Of course I have been immensely gratified and pleased. It is but human, and I cannot think wrong so to feel; but elated, I think not. It is constantly ringing in my ears, ‘ What hast thou that thou hast not received?’ And so feeling, withal, there has been an absence of self-consciousness or embarrassment that has fairly surprised me. Smalley did me there no more than justice—I have really not felt any conceit, for the reason that my knowledge of the success of my work is wholly external; I know it as a fact—but I don’t realise it, nor, somehow, identify it with myself.”

Both matter and style in his *Life of Nelson* were subjected to somewhat caustic criticism by Mr. David Hannay, who impugned some of Mahan’s historical conclusions, and among other things, some complimentary and some the reverse, had this to say of his style :

“ Captain Mahan—a slight touch of the school-master, and a pardonable tinge of the dogmatist being allowed for—is always on the side of the angels, that is to say, in agreement with common sense. . . . A book being by the nature of things a piece of writing, the question how it is written has to be, if not settled, at least recognised, when we are considering its merits. Like the error of Nelson in regard to Napoleon’s generalship in 1797, Captain Mahan’s style is not quite worthy of his native sagacity. There is a certain looseness of fibre about his form which weakens the matter in the telling; and this has its counterpart in a certain redundancy of narrative. . . . Captain Mahan is not without something of Napier’s sense of the poetry of war, but he cannot get

it expressed. It is all in solution, and struggles out incoherently."

At the end of the article <sup>1</sup> these words are pencilled in Mahan's handwriting :

"The divergenec is such as to show that one or the other of us is either wholly incompetent—or in this particular instance too wholly wrong-headed—to write as a critic on military matters."

Writing to Mahan about his *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Admiral Colomb, the noted naval historian, said :

"I hope you were satisfied with the reception your book received in this country. I think all our naval men regard it as *the* naval book of the age. We have all been struck by the beauty of your style, as much as by the force of your arguments."

Occasionally, although not in his principal works, he indulged in what the stylists would term inelegancies of expression ; such for instance as "there could not but be mistakes," when he intended to say "mistakes would have been inevitable" ; and "he came to be more distinguished," instead of "he became." In one article he dropped into the mistake of referring to the German Emperor as "Emperor of Germany."

A few years ago a list of the first Forty Immortals to constitute a proposed American Academy of Arts and Letters was prepared by the National Institute of Arts and Letters of America. The name of Alfred Thayer Mahan was among those thus honoured.

Mahan deserved and won personal credit for the tangible results of his many excellences. Literary style is in large measure a gift, similar to that of a beautiful voice, a lovely face, remarkable strength or speed, for which the unthinking world is all too apt to ascribe

<sup>1</sup> *Nelson and his Biographers.*

credit to the individual, whereas such gifts merit but admiration, except in so far as they have been developed and improved by personal effort. To this task he devoted much painstaking thought and labour.<sup>1</sup> He by no means escaped criticism in respect of both matter and style, but it was the happy combination of the two, as constituting the literary vehicle of his priceless message to mankind, that influenced more than one authority to express the opinion that he was the greatest writer America had yet produced.

<sup>1</sup> "Such advance as I have made in technique—and I trust I have made some—I have owed to the critical running analysis of the construction of sentences, which has been my habit ever since I began to write. That this is constant with me, subconsciously, is shown by the frequency with which it passes into a conscious logical recasting of what I read. To get antecedents and consequents as near one another as possible; qualifying words or phrases as close as may be to that which they qualify; an object near its verb; to avoid an adjective which applies to one or two nouns being so placed as to seem to qualify both; such minute details seem to me worthy of the utmost care, and I think I can trace advance in these respects."—*From Sail to Steam.*

## CHAPTER XXIV

### RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS

"The good which Admiral Mahan did in the Church and in the world are not easily estimated, but his life, with its deep faith, was an inspiration to us all."—FREDERICK BURGESS, Bishop of Long Island.

No portrait of Alfred Thayer Mahan which failed to emphasise his deeply religious nature would faithfully reflect his true personality. It would be difficult to exaggerate the intensity of his convictions or his life-long devotion to things spiritual.

His letters to his friend Mr. Ashe suggest that he was religiously inclined, even at the age of eighteen, although perhaps unconsciously so. He disclaims any personal religious tendencies at this time, but expresses scorn for anyone who becomes religious from a sense of fear. His correspondence indicates that a deep appreciation of the literary beauty<sup>1</sup> of the Bible led to his active adoption of the religious life. In one letter when he was nineteen he says :

"Do you ever read the Bible? What a beautiful passage this is that I met the other day in a book :

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern : then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

"Sam, I am not religious, but does it need religion to

<sup>1</sup> "With the English Bible and Shakespeare one may inherit not only the Anglo-Saxon tradition but also the world's supreme achievements in prose, poetry, and religion."—Thayer's *Life of John Hay*.

appreciate the beauty and sublimity of such poetry as that ? ”

Mr. Ashe recounts that at the end of the Civil War, Mahan sent him part of his savings to help him to make a start in his profession.

His diaries as a young man in the twenties testify to a daily habit of self-introspection most rare in one so young and not in holy orders. Its severe and searching character might almost be described as morbidly exacting. No action or thought during the day escaped examination and criticism in the light of his duty toward God. His proneness to ill-temper caused him much concern as a young man. An entry in his diary reads :

“ They can never be recalled. Those moments of unlovely irritability cannot be changed to sweet charity now. Pardoned they may be, but respent, never.”

No doubt this religious habit of life was largely, even if unconsciously, the outcome of early association with his mother, who was a profoundly devout woman and instilled into her children a deep sense of the beauty and satisfaction of the religious life, and the exquisite joy of close communion with the never-failing Friend, who, although transcending definition in so poor and insufficient a medium as language, may perhaps be visualised as the spiritual embodiment of the sum of all the noblest aspirations of the human heart.

Among the most notable traits in Mahan's character was a sense of duty so strong and so all-comprehensive that it was impossible for him to be other than scrupulously honest in thought, word, and deed. As a natural outcome, everyone trusted him, far and near ; and his writings deservedly earned an enviable reputation for impartial truth in statement and accuracy in detail. In all his twenty books and innumerable pamphlets, articles, and letters on various subjects, so far as the

author has discovered, only twice was he justly accused of an inaccuracy of any moment, and in both instances the error was acknowledged and rectified in subsequent editions of the book in which it occurred.

While there is no evidence that Mahan ever prayed for material things, it was the invariable habit of his life to ask for spiritual guidance and assistance in all matters of importance. How marvellous a power is habit in every relation of life ! But for its mysterious force and silent influence the poor would do away with themselves and the rich would be down on their knees all day long thanking God for their overflowing larders. Mahan's natural reticence in connection with sacred matters is strikingly illustrated by the fact that none of his books, not even the autobiography he wrote under the title *From Sail to Steam*, contain more than a passing and isolated reference to his religious convictions. The one exception is *The Harvest Within*, which, under the description of *Thoughts on the Life of the Christian*, is of an entirely religious character, and eloquently testifies to the intensity of his spiritual beliefs, to his remarkable knowledge of the Scriptures, and to the study and research which from his youth up he had devoted to religious subjects.

In common with many religious works of a similar character, *The Harvest Within* suffers from a superabundance of familiar Biblical quotations, but the book abounds in helpful counsel, telling historic parallel and apt illustration, of which the following is perhaps a characteristic example :

“Untiring as man's efforts may be, and much as they may conduce to constitute conditions favorable to life and to growth, the life is not his, never was his ; never, thank God, will be his. It was given him ; it is maintained in him. He grows, but he does not make himself. There is no self-made man in the Kingdom of God.”

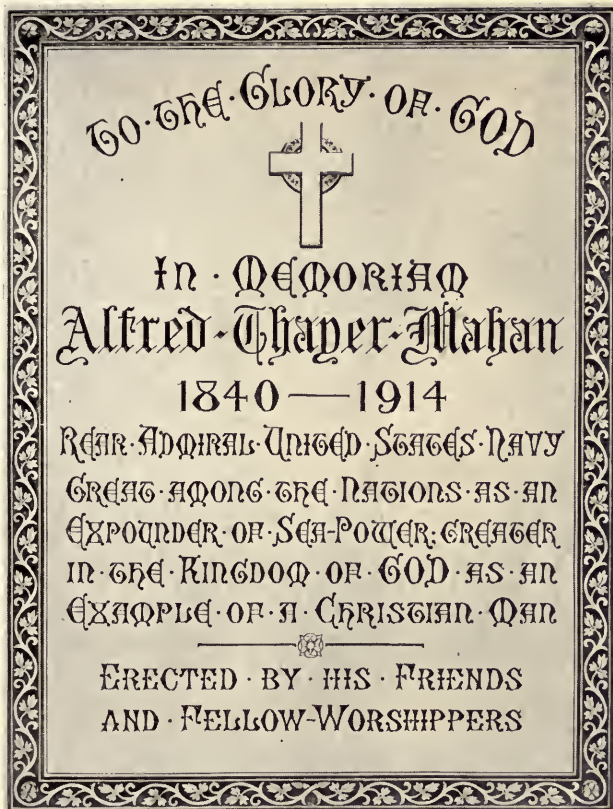
The brass tablet erected in his memory in the Church of the Atonement at Quogue, Long Island, and which is here reproduced, bears faithful witness to the genuinely high opinion in which he was held by those who knew him best. His bank-books justify the assumption that he too agreed that "the greatest of these is Charity"; for in view of the comparatively limited means at his disposal, they disclose a liberality bespeaking a most generous nature and a high sense of responsibility towards his less favoured fellow men. No. 4 of some "Notes for daily conduct of life," which appear in one of his diaries when he was about twenty-eight, provides for setting aside seventeen dollars per month for almsgiving. This would have made a considerable inroad into his slender income in those early days. He was a believer in Charity in its highest and best sense, as interpreted by kind thoughts, kinder words, and kindest deeds; the one offering altogether acceptable to the Supreme Author of loving kindness, as attested in that matchless summary of the final and all-comprehensive verdict, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: for inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me."

Reference has already been made to Mahan's voluntary offering of all the means at his disposal at the end of the Civil War to help Southern Naval Officers in financial straits. Another instance of his kindly disposition is reflected in the following communication, which tells its own tale and from which the names have been appropriately deleted:

"BISHOP'S HOUSE.

"The Rev. — of — informs me that he has applied to you asking for a loan of money, and requests me to write you regarding this.

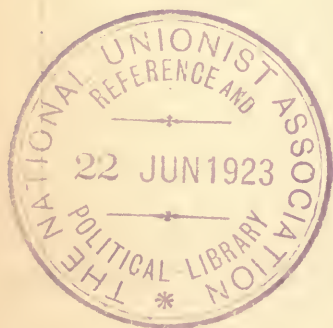
"Mr. — has been under heavy expense owing to the poor health of his mother, who is entirely dependent upon him. Mr. — has been at — for one year,



MEMORIAL TABLET IN THE CHURCH OF THE ATONEMENT, QUOGUE, LONG ISLAND.



THE CHESNEY GOLD MEDAL.



where he has furnished the rectory to make a home for his mother. His salary is \$1,200 per year. On this he would be able to get along were it not that he took his mother West for her health, before coming to—, which cost him three or four hundred dollars more than he anticipated. This, with the expense of setting up house-keeping, has caused him embarrassment.

“ I am sending you the facts, and leave to your own judgment whether you care to make the loan. There is no doubt that the loan would be of great assistance to Mr. — in his present situation.

“ Faithfully yours,  
“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

*Note by Admiral Mahan :*

“ Nov. 2, 1911. Sent Mr. — cheque for \$100 named January, 1913, for repayment, but said sum would be given or returned to some church work. He was, therefore, to consider himself in debt to the Church, rather than to me, and on that basis to contrive repayment.

“ In case of my death authorised him to pay the amount to Bishop — for missionary work in diocese.”

Now although Mahan seems to have privately lived up to the principle of the super-excellence of *Charity*, he publicly extolled *Hope* in an address in which he made his confession of faith, summarising his experiences in the following words :

“ It is, I think, the hopefulness of Religion that has most impressed itself as the result of my experience—and I am not naturally of sanguine temper. As a matter of experience, starting in life with a fearful and apprehensive mind, I find constantly growing the feeling of hopeful confidence. God has stood by me so often, surely I can trust Him now.

“ I sum it all up in the reiteration of my sure and joyful confidence, that I have tried God these many years and found Him ever faithful ; faithful not only in the ordering of my external life, but still more faithful in the gradual increase to me of that knowledge of God, in which standeth our eternal life ; a knowledge of whose growth I can give no account, except that I do know.

“ I thank you greatly for listening to me, and your Rector for asking me to speak. I value beyond words the opportunity, once in my life, before God’s people, to avow my faith, that to me He is, and has been,—not in my imperfect service, but in His own perfect faithfulness,—Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. I rejoice that once at least I am able publicly to lay at His feet in words—however poor my deeds—the confession that all I have, all I am, all that I have accomplished, has been of Him and through Him; and that, as the end draws near, there abides, what only my own demerit can forfeit, the Hope, which experience of His faithfulness renews day by day.”

He also extolled Hope in his address on receiving his Degree at Dartmouth College.

Regular church attendance was a lifelong habit of his, and there is no doubt he could have personally officiated at any service of the Church with conspicuous ability. It was not by any means unusual for him to signify by a smile and an inclination of the head his approval of those portions of a sermon which specially appealed to him, maintaining a solemn and undemonstrative attitude during the rest of the sermon; a procedure somewhat disconcerting at times to those of the clergy to whom it was a new experience; more especially as in such a small place of worship as the Church of the Atonement at Quogue, Mahan would be sitting within a few feet of the pulpit and in full view of the entire congregation.<sup>1</sup> When at sea, lonely and far away from family and friends, at the hour when service was being held in his parish

<sup>1</sup> “ He was to me a typical example of the humble servant of the Master, and his devotion and interest at the services in the chapel impressed me profoundly. And added to all was his missionary zeal. I shall never forget how impressed I was years ago by the fact that he went into the city on one of the boiling-hot days of August to attend a farewell service for some missionaries at the Board of Missions. He had a strong effect upon me whenever I preached, silently challenging me, as it were, to do my best, and I count it one of the greatest privileges of my life to have had him as hearer for so many years during the summer.”—FREDERICK B. CARTER.

church at home, he would break away, if possible, from his duties as captain of the ship, and read the Daily Service in his cabin.

Among other activities in the direction of religious work, Mahan was consulted about the revision of the Prayer Book, and wrote several articles on the subject which appeared in *The Churchman*. He was a strong advocate of uniformity in Church Service procedure, in order that community of worship throughout the world should be maintained. He read before the Episcopalian Club of Massachusetts in 1899 a paper on the "Relations of the Church to the State" which was subsequently published, and wrote a trenchant criticism of Winston Churchill's *The Inside of the Cup*. "That one letter," said a writer of the day, "showed that Admiral Mahan's reputation for scholarship, for close reasoning, for forceful writing and churchmanship of a high order, rests on a solid foundation." Later he contributed to *The North American Review* an effective reply to a paper on *Twentieth Century Christianity*, read by Doctor Charles W. Elliot of Harvard before a general conference of Unitarian and other churches.

This response solicited expressions of grateful appreciation from numerous quarters. One of these was from Mr. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy :

"MY DEAR ADMIRAL,

"I have read with the greatest pleasure and profit your article in *The North American Review*, replying to Dr. Elliot. It is most helpful to the younger men to read your clear call to hold fast to the ancient landmarks our fathers set.

"With sentiments of esteem and kind regards, I am,

"Sincerely yours,

"JOSEPHUS DANIELS."

And Bishop Gailor of Tennessee wrote : "I thank God for a layman who can state the faith as you have declared it."

Mahan did much to promote the missionary work of the Protestant Episcopal Church of North America, and was a member of the Commission on missionary work in connection with the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.

Although described by the Secretary of the Navy as the best informed man upon war and its lessons with whom he ever conversed, he was said in *The Spirit of Missions* to be by practice a man of peace, and like Gladstone a man of great versatility, but of a deeply spiritual and consecrated life, a son of whom the Church had reason to be proud.

He was an ardent supporter of Foreign Missions, and on the death of Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1900 he was elected to the Board of Missions, on which he served for ten years. An indirect outcome of his efforts was the Mahan School at Yangchow, China. He was for many years an active director of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Considered one of the best of its kind in any part of the world. Its building is crowned by a lighthouse erected by public subscription in memory of the victims of the *Titanic* disaster. It bears this inscription :

#### LIGHTHOUSE TOWER AND TIME BALL

*Erected by Public Subscription*

THIS LIGHTHOUSE TOWER IS A MEMORIAL TO THE PASSENGERS, OFFICERS AND CREW OF THE STEAMSHIP 'TITANIC,' WHO DIED AS HEROES WHEN THAT VESSEL SANK AFTER A COLLISION WITH AN ICEBERG.

Latitude 41° 46' North

Longitude 50° 14' West

April 15, 1912.

*House the brave who sleep  
Where the lost 'Titanic' lies,  
The men who knew what a man  
must do  
When he looks Death in the eyes.*

*'Women and children first,'  
Oh, strong and tender cry,  
The sons whom women had borne  
and nursed  
Remembered—and dared to die.*

*The boats crept off in the dark,  
The great ship groaned—and then—  
Oh, stars of the night who saw that sight,  
Bear witness THESE WERE MEN !*

HENRY VAN DYKE.

and the success of that splendid institution owes much to his practical sympathy and unfailing support.

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, held December 16, 1914, the following minute was unanimously adopted :

" The death of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Rear-Admiral, U.S.N., retired, America's foremost naval strategist and the world's greatest authority on sea power, brings especial sorrow to the Board of Managers of the Institute of which he was a Lay Vice-President, having been a member of the Board since 1867—forty-seven years. He was an absolutely conscientious member of the many Committees on which he willingly, faithfully, and graciously served. He was an interested and active member of the Building Committee which erected the Institute on the corner of South Street and Coenties Slip, and was also a member of the Seamen's Church Institute of America, a Commission appointed by the General Convention in 1904.

" His deep interest in all matters which concerned the good of seamen and his unfailing and unselfish service in their interest will be gratefully remembered by all who had the privilege of working with him.

" His quiet strong personality was always felt.

" He was essentially a man of God of superior intellect, and with profound religious convictions ; a great Churchman and an ardent patriot.

" The Board of Managers desires to express to his immediate family and relatives profound feeling of respect and sympathy.

" An Extract from the Minutes.

" FRANK T. WARBURTON,

" *Secretary.*"

The following resolution bespeaks charitable activities in another direction :

" At a meeting of the Trustees of the American Church Institute for Negroes, held at the Diocesan House,

Thursday afternoon, December 3, 1914, the following resolution was unanimously adopted :

“RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the American Church Institute for Negroes desire to express their sense of the very great loss which they have sustained in the death of Rear-Admiral Mahan. He was always most deeply interested in the work of the Institute, and was one of the most regular attendants at its meetings. His counsel and advice were always greatly prized, and it will be difficult if not impossible to find anyone to fill his place.

“DAVID H. GREER,  
“President,

*“American Church Institute for Negroes.”*

The Reverend Milo Mahan, the Admiral's uncle, probably influenced his nephew's mind strongly towards a sound conception of religion when he was a young man at Columbia College and lived in his house. In a letter written in 1864, among a number of other interesting things he says :

“Things happen to us constantly, which prove that God rules, or else that Chance rules. But, if I must choose between Chance or God, to solve the mysteries of life, it is certainly reasonable to refer things to God of whom I can form some idea, rather than to Chance of which I can form no idea whatever. God may be mysterious. His ways may be dark and past finding out. But Chance is not mysterious merely, it is utterly unintelligible.”

Frederick the Great is quoted as having said :  
“The older one gets the more convinced one becomes that His Majesty King Chance does three-quarters of the business of this miserable universe.”

Lieutenant Commander K. Asami of the Japanese Navy wrote Mahan the following letter in March 1913 :

“ Admiral Mahan,  
“ Care of Navy Department,  
“ Washington, D.C.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Knowing your interest in the cause of religion and humanity, I venture to write to you about a plan that I, as a Christian, have of writing the biography of the late Vice-Admiral Serata, who was a Christian. The biography is to be in Japanese, but if the whole, or some parts, could be published in English it would tend, I believe, to promote good feeling between your country and ours, since Admiral Serata was educated in Annapolis. In any case the publication in Japan alone will have some effect in promoting the cause of religion and of international peace.

“ If you would write some words for the book, either in the form of an introduction from the American point of view, or as a chapter on Admiral Serata's life in the Academy, such words would have great influence upon our officers, who are all familiar with your works.

“ I should be much obliged, if, in addition to this, you could introduce me to some of the Admiral's classmates at the Academy between 1877 and 1881, as I should like to have some reminiscences written by some of them.

“ I am aware that I am asking a great favor, but trusting that you will be willing to render your assistance in so good a cause,

“ I am, Sir,

“ Respectfully yours,

“ K. ASAMI,

“ *Lieutenant Commander, I.J.N.*”

That Mahan readily consented is apparent from a letter which followed a few months later and of which the following is an extract :

“ It is with gratitude and satisfaction that I receive your kind letter of May 17, granting my request for an introduction to the proposed biography of Admiral Serata. The mere fact of your writing it will help pro-

mote good feeling between the two nations ; and I hope that the book will have such a circulation that your message regarding the harmonising element in Christianity will cause many to think of the power of Christ to make all men one. Admiral Uriu has consented to help in the preparation of the book, which I trust may bring the Gospel to many who have not received it."

A year later Commander Asami wrote :

"The flaming work of the Serata's biography now come to the end, and it will be published within two months. Admiral Mahan is well acquainted in our Navy through his books, and he is now beginning to be widely known through his Christian character."

Admiral C. H. Stockton wrote an appreciation of Mahan in *The Churchman*, in which he said that there were no half-way measures with the Admiral, and that he entered into the devout life with all of his intellectual power and all the strength of his character. That he was not only a Christian gentleman and a devout Churchman, but belonged to the highest and most unselfish type of American citizenship.

Mahan's message at seventy years of age may be summed up in these words of his :

"It is on this practical side of religion, as one who has tried God these thirty years and more, that I see any right in me to speak. We begin, perhaps not exactly by trusting in ourselves, but in laying great store—not wholly undeserved—upon the things we ourselves do ; upon our prayers, our efforts, our observances of every kind. They are right ; they are good ; they are incumbent ; but the great trouble is that they are ours, rather than His. So we go forth, generation after generation, to the conflict—and many a rattling fall we get.

"The hearing of God's word, prayer, the outward act of receiving the sacraments, spiritual effort of every

character,—this is man's part,—the casting of the seed and the tending of it; but the growth is not of him. The ripening of Life, the maturing of the Christian character, goes on by itself, not independent of man's *care*, but wholly independent of man's *power*.

“Here you have, not only in due proportion, but also fully developed, the two factors—man's part and God's part. The man casts the seed into the earth,—an expression which involves by implication all that man does, the preparation of the ground, the planting, the tending, the watering; but who is there that knows not that the growth of the grain is a *life*, the essential principle of which not only defies man's investigation, but is independent of his power?

“You are to supply the conditions essential to the Lord's coming, by prayer, by sacrament, by effort, for these are means which He has ordained; but you are not to fall into the spiritual error of expecting that the doing these things will make you good, that *you* will conquer by their means.

“I knew long ago by intellectual acceptance; I know now by a knowledge for which I can give no account; but I know as I never knew of old. And I feel justified in believing that through my generation telling you to expect that which I, at least, did not for a long time apprehend, you will find earlier than I found; you will find that knowledge and that confidence, the possession of which passes all understanding, like the Peace of God,—which indeed it is.

“Such is my experience which I give to you. Some distant day, perhaps, someone here young may tell a future generation that he was helped along his road—not by me, but by the Spirit of God speaking through me; for unless it be the Spirit that speaks, and not I, these words are vain. Perhaps then he will feel that, having been so helped, he, at the close of his days, was farther on than else he would have been.

“It is the grace of God to advancing years, a grace which, when received, more than compensates the man for the beauty and freshness of youth, that with the lapse of time he thus more and more sees his Maker as He is, and sees himself as he is.”

“ A favourite verse of Mahan’s was Browning’s :

“ *Grow old along with me !*

*The best is yet to be,*

*The last of life, for which the first was made ;*

*Our times are in His hand*

*Who saith, ‘ A whole I plann’d,*

*Youth shows but half ; trust God, see all, nor be afraid.’ ”*

The contemplation of the incidents of such a life as that of Alfred Thayer Mahan is apt to raise a question in the mind as to just what the term *Religion* is going to imply in the twentieth century. Haply the day is approaching when, except possibly among the densely ignorant, religion will cease to be regarded as a blind adherence to certain arbitrary observances and articles of faith inherited in large measure from mediaevalism. It has been said that the happiness of one of the least of His children is more precious to Almighty God than all the Creeds in Christendom. When the various Churches and Sects pool their energies, inter-associate their divergencies of creed and procedure, overcome their prejudices—for the most part acquired by inheritance—and teach their people the one supreme and fundamental truth, that in the sight of God kindness is everything, as compared with which the Church is nothing, will not Religion become universally recognised as essentially a *standard of conduct*, an habitual practice of the golden rule ?

It is a difficult and a delicate matter to attempt to interpret the innermost feelings of a fellow human being, but in so far as it is permissible to do so, it would seem justifiable to suggest that Mahan’s religion was of that nature which in the present day is apt to be termed old-fashioned ; that in his heart he was a conscientious advocate of the dogma of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Whatever may have been his undisclosed convictions upon the many phases of Christian belief, his religion was of the type which makes for irreproach-

able conduct in life; and Mahan no doubt realised that there is no joy in the world in any way comparable to that which inevitably springs from the giving of happiness to others, and that in the final analysis Religion is neither Church, nor creed, nor dogma, nor observance; but, first, last, and always, *kindness*, and all that *kindness* implies and comprehends.

When he passed away, Bishop Greer of New York wrote this to Mrs. Mahan:

“I shared with all the world the admiration for his eminent services to his chosen profession, and yet, beyond and above all that, I admired him for the beauty and charm of his Christian character.”

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE AUTUMN OF LIFE

"Call no man happy till he dies; but having had the full term of life I feel that I may say confidently that I have had seventy years of happiness very little clouded."—A. T. MAHAN.

MAHAN was promoted to Rear-Admiral on the retired list on June 29, 1906. "You will congratulate me, I am sure," he writes Admiral Bouverie Clark, "on promotion to Rear-Admiral Retired, a more substantial incident being that it increases my pay by something over £200. For the other, 'Captain Mahan,' has become almost a *nom de plume* for me, and I am a little perplexed about changing it." Most men on approaching the three score and ten milestone yearn for a complete relaxation from toil, but this virile thinker continued valiantly in harness until the end, although he was officially detached from all naval duty on June 6, 1912, and in October of that year, when he was seventy-two, he said in a letter to a friend:

"I am now with friends near Philadelphia, and have already felt the benefit in these days, not only of the idleness but of the absence of the desk and its paraphernalia which keeps work always in mind. I hope the total absence will break up all such associations and perhaps free me from the active interposition in current national naval policies which has added so much to my work this year."

The years 1912 and 1913 were partly occupied with the publication of *Armaments and Arbitration* and *Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Inde-*

*pendence*; and about this time his correspondence with Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark shows that he was realising that the years were beginning to tell. In one letter he says :

“ My old beloved friend, Dr. Johnson—do you know your Boswell?—was always morose towards anyone that reminded him of his birthday. I can't say I have quite the same feeling about it, having rather a philosophic indifference, except at the not infrequent reminders I get that I can't do things quite as I used to. A little slacking of the grip here, a little shortening of the walk there, not quite so many minutes of head work per diem, these and other little similar incidents remind me that I am coming to pieces after a fashion; here a little and there a little, which all counts in the end. All this seems like grumbling, but it isn't; upon the whole I think I am happier, steadily, than at any previous period of my life.”

Such was his vitality, however, at seventy-one years of age that he was able to write :

“ Here our bicycles are at the door like so many horses every day, and we go on them everywhere—church, post-office, beach, friends, and all. It is also for me a standard of strength. The long rides of five years ago I never take now, and my long rides are those which then were daily. For bathing I am much where I used to be, and go in colder water, remaining as long or longer. With the thermometer at 20 I get on very well with no overcoat, having great delight in the freer movement, and wonder at seeing men forty years my junior in garments that are about as limber as plate armor, with heavy furs often to boot. I can still walk nearly four miles an hour, though I could not keep it up over an hour.”

The house referred to in the paragraph just quoted was built by the Admiral and Mrs. Mahan some years before this, and became their permanent home in Long Island. It is known as “ Marshmere,” and the accom-

panying photograph shows the side away from the sea and the garden. Here the author spent several enjoyable weeks as the guest of Mrs. Mahan, sorting out material for this work in the Admiral's study.

In the early part of 1913 he was abroad with his wife and two daughters, visiting France, Italy, and Sicily, and in a letter from Palermo he complains in somewhat melancholy fashion, "as an awful proof of old age," that sight-seeing, which a few years before he used to enjoy, bores him indescribably.

The condition of affairs in the Balkans at that time evidently gave him some concern for the safety of his family. He feared the spark which might ignite the mighty conflagration, the arrival of which he foresaw and so eloquently predicted in his writings. He tells Sir Bouverie Clark :

"Things have been moving pretty rapidly since I left London. It has been on my mind, though I have not worried, that any slight slip among the diplomats might land all the fat in the fire, and the Mediterranean be a scene of war before I would get my womenfolk out—not to say my gray hairs, what I have of them. Even now I should not be surprised by a *mauvais tour* in the proceedings, but they have been talking so long I fancy now they will be able to settle things without fighting. Nevertheless, as long as Turkey exists she will be perpetually giving rise to 'questions.' I believe the individual Turk is not a bad sort, but any people more hopelessly unfit for governing it is hard to imagine. I believe the Persians are worse."

On the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, he received many gratifying offers to write about the war. Two of these were of a highly remunerative character, and the money would have been more than acceptable, for in the closing years of his life he was much concerned about the financial position of his family in the event of his death and the cessation of his pay as Rear-Admiral



ADMIRAL MAHAN'S HOME, *MARSHMERE*, QUOGUE, LONG ISLAND.



Retired. He was deprived of the fruits of this lucrative work, however, by an Order from the Government, prohibiting officers of the Army and Navy from writing about the war. The Order read :

“ THE WHITE HOUSE,

“ WASHINGTON,

“ August 6, 1914.

“ I write to suggest that you request and advise all officers of the Service, whether active or retired, to refrain from public comment of any kind upon the military or political situation on the other side of the water. I would be obliged if you would let them know that the request and advice comes from me. It seems to me highly unwise and improper that officers of the Navy and Army of the United States should make any public utterances to which any color of political or military criticism can be given where other nations are involved.

“ Cordially and faithfully yours,

“ WOODROW WILSON.

“ Josephus Daniels,

“ *Secretary of the Navy.*”

Mahan appealed to the Secretary of the Navy for exemption as a retired officer :

“ QUOGUE, N.Y.,

“ August 15, 1914.

“ To the Secretary of the Navy.

“ 1. I have received the Department's Special Order of August 6, 1914, with reference to public comment by officers upon the existing European War.

“ 2. I would represent that the status of a retired naval officer is by law so detached from employment by the Government, that his relation to the course of the Government and consequent responsibility of the Government for his published opinions differ scarcely at all from the case of a private citizen.

“ This consideration is reinforced by the fact that all the weight attached to the judgment of any particular officer is purely personal to him, and therefore private.

If I were to resign from the Navy to-morrow, my opinions on professional matters would be valued neither less nor more than they now are.

“ 3. Assuming that the reason of the Government for the Order was to forestall any appearance of bias on its own part towards either belligerent—for no otherwise can a personal expression affect it—I submit that the published opinion of a retired officer can in no wise compromise the just sensitiveness of the Government as to the clear and evident impartiality of its attitude.

“ 4. Public opinion being in the last analysis the determining force in our national policy, the effect of the Order is to disable a class of men best qualified by their past occupations, and present position, to put before the public considerations which would tend to base public opinion, in matters of current public interest, upon sound professional grounds.

“ 5. Personally, at the age of seventy-four, I find myself silenced at a moment when the particular pursuits of nearly thirty years, the results of which had the approval of the naval authorities in almost all countries, might be utilised for the public. I admit a feeling of personal disappointment, but that necessarily must be of less consequence in any reconsideration that may be granted. I may state that I have, from Great Britain and from our own country, applications more than I could attend to, if permitted, couched in terms of strong appreciation of my particular fitness for the work, and which may consequently be assumed to indicate a popular want.

“ 6. I believe that the terms of the Order exceed in stringency the rules of many of the great naval states, notably those of Great Britain. The Officer of Naval Intelligence can probably inform the Department on this point.

“ 7. On my own behalf I request the withdrawal of the Order as far as applicable to retired officers.”

Influential friends also made heroic efforts to induce the Administration to make an exception in his favour in view of his world-wide reputation for accurate and

impartial presentation of military facts,<sup>1</sup> but they failed in their object.

Colonel Frederick Mahan, writing from Paris in May 1915 to a friend in New York, says :

“ I thank you very much for your words of sympathy in regard to my brother's death. There is no doubt in the minds of our family that the President's ‘ muzzling order ’ forbidding officers in the Army or Navy to write anything in connection with the war hastened greatly his death, because—so my sister writes me—he chafed much at not being able to call the attention of our people to the great danger of being unprepared.”

These letters from the Editors of *The Independent* and *Leslie's* tell their own story :

“ THE INDEPENDENT,

“ 119, WEST 40TH STREET,

“ NEW YORK.

“ FENWICK, CONN.,

“ August 7, 1914.

“ DEAR ADMIRAL MAHAN,

“ The telephone treated me badly this afternoon, and I said I would write. We hope that you will find it possible to write each week during the progress of the war an interpretation of the naval events, so that the people may understand what is going on, and what it means—so far as that can be done consistently with the President's instructions. For the newspaper rights in such a series of articles we shall be glad to pay you one hundred dollars a week. It seems to us that it will constitute a great public service, as well as be a strong feature for *The Independent*. The articles may be from 1,200 to 3,000 words, and should be in hand each week on Friday.

<sup>1</sup> In 1906 President Roosevelt had written him : “ Your position is a peculiar one, and without intending to treat this as a precedent, I desire you to have a free hand to discuss in any way you wish the so-called peace proposals. You have a deserved reputation as a publicist which makes this proper from the public standpoint. Indeed, I think it important for you to write just what you think of the matter.”

"I venture to recall myself to your acquaintance as for many years the publisher of *The Outlook*.

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM B. HOWLAND."

"THE INDEPENDENT,

"119, WEST 40TH STREET,

"NEW YORK,

"August 9, 1914.

"DEAR ADMIRAL MAHAN,

"I am delighted beyond measure to hear that you will try to contribute an article on the Naval Strategy of the War to *The Independent*, and I take great pleasure in enclosing our check of \$100 for it.

"We shall need the manuscript by Thursday of next week.

"Sincerely yours,

"WILLIAM B. HOWLAND."

(Note by Mahan :

Returned "advanced check" Aug. 11.

A. T. M.)

"THE INDEPENDENT,

"August 12, 1914.

"DEAR ADMIRAL MAHAN,

"Your letter of August 10, followed by that of August 11, returning check for One Hundred dollars, is at hand. Thank you very much for giving our application so careful attention. I am quite confident that the President has issued his instructions in rather more drastic fashion than is desirable in the interests of the public, and I am glad to find that you agree with me in this feeling. Would it possibly be worth while, and in proper accord with the attitude of an officer toward the Administration, for you to make inquiry, either through the Secretary of the Navy, or directly to the President, whether for the kind of interpretation we have in mind, an exception may not be properly made. It is the purpose of *The Independent* to interpret the news, which is poured out by the daily papers in a flood, in such intelligent fashion as to afford a consecutive, clear and impartial Story of the War. There is no naval officer

so well qualified as yourself to do this work. If you should feel that it is proper for you to make any inquiry at Washington, and let me know, we shall also be glad to take the matter up.

“Yours sincerely,

“WILLIAM B. HOWLAND.”

“LESLIE’S,

“NEW YORK,

“August 5, 1914.

“MY DEAR ADMIRAL,

“Your articles have always pleased me, but none has given me greater pleasure than the one I received from your pen this morning. It impelled me to telegraph you the proposition that you follow the war, from the naval standpoint, as a regular weekly contributor to *Leslie’s*, choosing your own subject or your own point of view, and getting the article to this office by Tuesday morning of each week. I do not ask that these weekly contributions be long, you can suit your own convenience as to their length. It will be a pleasure to remit \$100 every week for each article, and we will feel honored by having you as one of our contributing editors.

“Very truly yours,

“JOHN A. SLEICHER,

“*Editor.*”

In May 1914 Mahan was invited by Mr. Atherton Brownell to join an Editorial Syndicate, and the following extracts from Mr. Brownell’s letters explain the scope of the project :

“Reduced to its simplest point, my proposition will be to ask if you will be willing to write during the coming year a series of short articles, not to exceed 700 words in length each, and to the number perhaps of twelve, having to do with current and timely events particularly within the scope of your interest and study. It is designed that these should be published on the editorial page of a large chain of papers (dailies) over your signature.

"The importance of this work can best be indicated when I say to you that this suggestion to you is a part of a broader plan.

"Without going into a discussion as to whether or not the influence of the daily editorial page has actually deteriorated or not—since there are those who hold that the same complaint has been heard from time immemorial—there can be no question that the calibre of the daily editorial in most instances is not such as to create sound thought by the public as to the news events of which they read.

"The plan that is now in mind is to create a board of contributing editors, composed of men each one of whom has made himself an authority in some special line or lines, and representing various shades of opinion, who shall contribute with more or less regularity his views or digest of the news of the day."

"It is the purpose that this work shall be directed by an advisory board, which provisionally has been selected as follows: Prof. Franklin H. Giddings, Columbia University; Dr. Talcott Williams, Dean of the School of Journalism of Columbia; Waldemar Kaempffert, Managing Editor of the *Scientific American*; and the officers of the syndicate, consisting of John W. Hunter, formerly President of the *Washington Herald*, and myself.

"We have extended this invitation thus far to Dr. Charles W. Eliot, Albert Bushnell Hart, Prof. William R. Shepherd, Prof. Emory Johnson, Dr. David Starr Jordan, Dr. Ernst Richard, Roger W. Babson, former Ambassador Curtis Guild, Frank A. Vanderlip, Edward T. Devine and several others, and are receiving from most of them a full measure of encouragement for the plan."

(Note by Mahan: "Charge fifty dollars for 700; 700 being harder than 1,000.")

Although Mahan unfortunately survived but four months of active hostilities in 1914, he had time and opportunity enough to express his approval of the disposition and strategy of the British Fleet, significantly adding that it would have been madness to have yielded to any rash

impulse to pursue the Germans into their mine-locked harbours. He further expressed his firm conviction as to the ultimate victory of the Allies, and paid a glowing tribute to the British Navy. He is reported to have said in an interview shortly after the outbreak of the war :

“ You people in England do not realise the immense admiration felt all over the world, yes, and in Germany also, for the British Navy. Speaking from my standpoint, as an American, I tell you that there is only one navy in the world, and that the others are mere strip-lings by comparison. I do not mean to underrate the American and other fleets, but, by comparison with the British, every other navy still has much to learn, Whether the *moral* of the officers and men is as good to-day as in the time of Nelson remains to be proved, but, personally, I hold that the British Navy to-day, in all essentials, remains as incomparably superb as ever.”

In a letter written to Messrs. B. F. Stevens & Brown, his London agents, Mahan said :

“ I take this opportunity to express to you the vivid interest with which I am following Great Britain's course in this war. But the testimony to the uprightness and efficiency of her Imperial rule, given by the strong adhesion and support of India and the Dominions, is a glory exceeding that of pitched battle and overwhelming victory.”

In summing up the varied and complex incentives which contributed to bring about that wondrous unanimity with which the widely scattered overseas partners of the British Empire instantly rallied to the flag on the outbreak of war in 1914, who can estimate the measure of the silent unconscious influence of England's irreproachable Court ?

Mahan entertained no illusions whatever as to the quarter in which lay the awful responsibility for plunging the world in bloodshed and sorrow in 1914. In an

interview to the press at the time,<sup>1</sup> among other statements of his indicating profound and comprehensive grasp of the situation, was this :

“ The aggressive insolence of Austria’s ultimatum to Servia, taken with the concession by the latter of all the demands except those too humiliating for self-respect, indicate that the real cause of the war is other than set forth by the ultimatum.

“ Knowing from past experience how the matter must be regarded by Russia, it is incredible that Austria would have ventured on the ultimatum unless assured beforehand of the consent of Germany to it. The inference is irresistible that the substance of the ultimatum was the pretext for a war already determined on as soon as plausible occasion offered.”

In the later period of his life, two of Mahan’s favourite haunts in New York were the Century Club and the University Club. In the library of the latter he was for many years a familiar figure. Here he wrote several of his books. In Mr. James W. Alexander’s history of the University Club, his portrait appears among those of other distinguished members. Through the courtesy of Mr. William Alexander, Secretary of the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, Mr. Robert Bridges, Editor of *Scribner’s Magazine*, and the members of the House Committee and the Library Committee of the Club, the author was accorded the invaluable privilege of two months’ honorary membership, which was of no little advantage in preparing some of the matter for these pages, and for which he will always remain indebted to the members of the Club. He also records with gratitude the courteous hospitality of the Lotos Club, famous for its exhibitions of pictures and its dinners to distinguished men.

For some time previous to his death Mahan had been

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

at work on a History of the United States, and among his papers is an introductory summary of some thirty sheets, which is apparently all that was actually written, although there are evidences of extensive preparation.

This was apparently his last literary work. From beginning to end he wrote for thirty years, and at the close of his life perhaps no tribute to his genius was more highly appreciated by his friends than that from the British Ambassador at Washington :

“ BRITISH EMBASSY,

“ WASHINGTON, D.C.,

“ *December 2, 1914.*

“ MADAM,

“ It is my duty on behalf of the British Admiralty to express the sorrow British sailors feel at the death of your husband. Although other countries besides our own and other Navies profited by the insight and knowledge with which he drew and discovered the great conclusions of Naval History, the British service is his chief debtor. The achievements of our sailors were his theme and their consequences his doctrine.

“ There is probably no officer in any of the Battle Fleets and Squadrons now serving all over the world who has not been, and is not now being encouraged and instructed by the truths he taught about sea power. We remember also that he was a sincere friend of our country in times when friends are dear.

“ I have the honour to remain, Madam,

“ Respectfully yours,

“ CECIL SPRING-RICE.”

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE PEACEFUL END

"It was my good fortune to be thrown into close relations with Admiral Mahan. He was a man of rare scope and vision, being able to see things in their wider relations. His place in his day and generation is assured, as that of a student of affairs, past and present, who possessed a peculiar power to grasp principles which others had seen only dimly, and to set them forth with such clearness and force that all could understand them. In this way he left a deep impression upon his times. Equally characteristic was his deep sense of truth and perfect sincerity. He was also singularly fair in his judgments. All that he said and wrote sprang from profound conviction and an earnest desire to be just and helpful."—PROFESSOR JOHN BASSETT MOORE, LL.D.<sup>1</sup>

IN letters to his old friend Admiral Sir Bouverie Clark, with whom he continued to correspond to the end, Mahan began complaining in 1908 of waning strength, the result of which had been to compel him to cut down both work and exercise. In 1907 and 1908 he had two serious operations, and the pressure to write all that was asked of him subsequently brought on what he described as a heart attack, from which, however, he recovered.

He told Admiral Clark, in 1908, that he was feeling close to his actual age, sixty-eight, whereas two years before he was "substantially fifty." He still claimed, however, that he had plans and an outlook, and was contemplating the writing of another book. Three years later he wrote: "The conclusion of the whole matter is I am a hopeless old fogey"; notwithstanding which, in the autumn of 1914, he moved to Washington

<sup>1</sup> Professor of International Law and Diplomacy, and Assistant Secretary of State.

with his family, intending to pass the winter there in special research work for the Carnegie Institute, with a view to writing the history of American expansion and its bearing on sea power, a monumental work to which he had given much thought. In November he had another heart attack, to which he succumbed. He quietly and peacefully breathed his life away at the Naval Hospital in Washington on December 1, 1914, in his seventy-fifth year.

The funeral service was held in St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Washington, the Rev. Ernest Smith, the Rector, officiating. In accordance with the Admiral's wish the service was of the simplest character and without military ceremony. As in his life, so in his death, he manifested the same modest and unassuming tendencies. His mortal remains lie buried in the little cemetery at Quogue, Long Island, and a simple cross marks his last resting-place.

The cousinly tribute which here follows strikes the keynote of his singularly unpretentious nature :

“ CHESTNUT AVENUE,

“ CHESTNUT HILL,

“ *December 12, 1914.*

“ I was so glad we could be with you at that beautiful service at St. Thomas' Church. It seemed to me that the simplicity of it all was just what Cousin Alfred would have liked. I am so thankful that we had that little visit from him last winter, for it left such a lasting impression on my mind of his goodness and humility. I had always loved Cousin Alfred from the time he stayed with Madie when you were first married, and he used to sing to us the old songs, such as 'Where are you going, Billy Boy?' and 'Mother, will you buy me a pan of milk?' I have sung those same songs to all my children, and they love them too; but last winter I was so impressed with the way in which Cousin Alfred lived his religion, it was an example I hope I shall never forget.”

“ EUGENIA M. CHESTON.”

The obituary notices which appeared would fill a number of large scrap-books. Every newspaper and periodical of any importance in both hemispheres recorded the irretrievable loss the world had sustained, and published extended biographical sketches of his life and work, in many instances extending to several columns. From the mass a few extracts characteristic of the majority are here selected :

“ Rear-Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S.N., retired, America’s foremost naval strategist and the world’s greatest authority on sea power, died suddenly at the United States Naval Hospital here at 7.15 o’clock this morning of heart disease.

“ Though he was in his seventy-fifth year, Admiral Mahan was in apparently good health until the war began. The first month of hostilities deeply affected him. There were great demands made upon him for comments as a naval expert, and during the early days of the war he gave many interviews and wrote a number of articles dealing with the contest.

“ Only last week he visited Secretary Daniels at the Navy Department, and Mr. Daniels said to-night the Admiral was the best-informed man on the war and its lessons he had conversed with.

“ Admiral Mahan was as familiar with Europe, her history and armaments, as he was with American history, and knew many of the men actively identified with the war in high places in England, Germany, and France. Some of his intimate friends among the military and naval men in Europe had lost their lives in the war, and this shocked him.

“ His great reputation had been developed in the nine years immediately preceding the First Hague Conference. It was in 1890 that his first book of international importance, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, was published in Boston, and made the author known around the world. This book is really responsible for the German Navy as it exists to-day.

“ Three intimate friends who met him frequently on

his visit to Washington this winter, expressed the belief to-night that the war in Europe had hastened his death. They said that Admiral Mahan was not only most keenly interested in the great struggle, its relation to sea power, and the naval and strategic problems and lessons being solved or taught by the war, but that the events of the war greatly excited his mind and heart."—*The New York Times*."

The London *Morning Post*, in appreciative words, expressed the sympathetic admiration of the people of Great Britain :

" In Admiral Mahan dies the greatest among naval historians, for he both chronicled naval events and deduced from them their governing principles, so that he was above all the naval philosopher. Ever a cordial friend to England, inspired with a profound admiration for the British Navy, the distinguished American did in a sense which he himself never in the least anticipated inflict an immense burden upon this country. For he taught the civilised world what had hitherto been hid from their eyes, and which, excepting a few sailors and fewer statesmen, was by no means understood by the people of Great Britain, the sovereign virtue of sea power. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* was published in 1890, and in the course of a few years every nation began to profit by its teaching, with the inevitable result that Great Britain was compelled to spend larger and still increasing sums upon her Navy. For Mahan's doctrine, drawn as it was mainly from the history of the British Navy, proved in irrefragable terms that for the British Empire a supreme Navy was the condition of its existence. Few men who have achieved greatness owned less intention to win fame. One of the first British sailors to recognise the extraordinary value of the work was Lord Charles Beresford, who was then captain of H.M.S. *Undaunted*, and who wrote to the author on the subject. Gifted with an admirable modesty, Mahan was always ready to give his sagacious counsel to those who sought it. This country owes to the great

American a debt which can never be repaid, for he was the first elaborately and comprehensively to formulate the philosophy of British sea power, and from time to time, as occasions of difficulty arose, he published an essay or an article which indicated the right course for Great Britain to follow. He foresaw that the present war would come, and his counsel in existing circumstances would have been invaluable."

The spiritual aspect of Mahan's nature, and the loss which the Church sustained in his death, formed the subject of a tribute to his memory in the Parish record of Old Trinity Church, New York, which voiced the sentiments of Churchmen throughout the world :

" In the death of Admiral Mahan, the Church has lost one who may truly be described as a great layman, accepting with his whole heart the Church's teaching, interested and active in her work, illustrating her truth in his own Christian character and life. The powers of his trained and disciplined mind, which gained him recognition throughout the world in naval affairs, were used by Admiral Mahan just as earnestly and conscientiously in spiritual matters. He said once, on a public occasion, that he felt it a privilege to bear his witness that he found in the statements in the Church's Creed not only the deepest spiritual help but the most intense intellectual satisfaction. In 1910 Admiral Mahan published a work entitled *The Harvest Within, the Life of the Christian*, which reveals both his unusual theological knowledge and the reality of his own spiritual experience. Its keynote is found in the words 'The riches of Christ are unsearchable ; but chief among them is the gift of love for Himself. It is a gift, not an acquisition.' It would be well if every Churchman would make himself familiar with this volume."

Among the many letters of condolence and recognition of his services to mankind, was one from the Hon.

Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, who wrote on behalf of the Navy Department :

“NAVY DEPARTMENT,

“WASHINGTON,

“December 1, 1914.

“MRS. ALFRED T. MAHAN,

“2025 HILLYER PLACE,

“WASHINGTON, D.C.

“MY DEAR MRS. MAHAN,

“The Department is deeply grieved to learn of the death of your husband, Rear-Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, U.S. Navy, Retired, which occurred at the Naval Hospital, Washington, D.C., December 1, 1914, and extends to you its sincere sympathy in your bereavement.

“Admiral Mahan was not only a fine type of Naval Officer, but possessed a lovable character that endeared him to all with whom he came in contact. His attainments, which gave him a world-wide renown, were of immeasurable value to the country he loved and served, and though he is gone, his works happily remain as a guide and inspiration, not only for this generation but for all that are to come.

“What he so ably and convincingly wrote was accepted at home and abroad as authority, and there are no enlightened peoples who are not familiar with his name.

“In your distress you must feel a solemn pride that throughout the world to-day his passing will be learned of with deep regret, not only because of the high esteem in which his name is held, but because he leaves in the world of achievement a place that cannot be filled.

“Your grief is shared not only by the Service he loved and long and nobly worked for, but by the Nation.

“Very respectfully and with heartfelt sympathy,

“JOSEPHUS DANIELS,

“*Secretary of the Navy.*”

The Navy League of Great Britain sympathised with the American Navy League in their mutual loss, and expressed their feelings in this appreciative message :

“Members of the Navy League in every part of the world will deeply regret the death of Admiral Alfred

Thayer Mahan, which took place on December 1, 1914. To readers of *The Navy* the name of the distinguished American naval publicist will be a household word. No writer has more profoundly expressed the thought of his time with the significance of sea power in international policy. His series of great works on naval subjects profoundly influenced the thought of the nations, and the opinions he expressed with so much eloquence and conviction have been in no small measure responsible for the evolution of latter-day naval policy. The members of the British Navy League tender with all respect their most sincere expression of sympathy and regret to the members of the American Navy League and the people of the United States in the loss which they have sustained through the death of this gallant officer."

A couple of letters are here selected from the mass of communications from personal friends: one from Admiral Rodgers:

"GRAND HOTEL NATIONAL,

"LUCERNE,

"December 9, 1914.

"DEAR MRS. MAHAN,

"We were deeply grieved in learning by the papers of the death of your husband: indeed it came to us as a shock, for we recalled how well and strong and young he was only three years ago when he came to Newport and the War College. We recalled this and the deep impression he made upon us all by the interest and range of his conversation and the charm of his manner. Of the fame he acquired years ago and maintained throughout his life I need not speak to you who were for so long his co-laborer, but I beg you to receive this expression of our very deep sympathy in the loss of one whose name is known the world around and to believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"RAYMOND T. RODGERS."

And one from Mr. James Ford Rhodes, the distinguished historian and lecturer:

" 392, BEACON STREET,

" BOSTON,

" December 3, 1914.

" DEAR MRS. MAHAN,

" I must send to you my profound grief at Admiral Mahan's death. I had a long talk with him last April and he seemed to me in the best of health, using a strong voice and an active brain as he imparted to me his common-sense views of the policy of our country which was under our discussion. My acquaintance with Admiral Mahan runs back to the last century, and while we did not see one another often, it so happened that we had long talks when we met. I learned very much from him and always felt that, after an interview, I had made an intellectual advance. We saw one another frequently at the University Club, not so often at the Century, and the impression that I formed from my intercourse with him during his several visits to Boston, was confirmed, that never did I know a man of such just celebrity, and such rare intellectual distinction, who was withal so modest.

" I feel that history and literature have suffered a great loss.

" I remain,

" Very truly yours,

" JAMES FORD RHODES."

The following resolution speaks for itself :

" NAVY RECORDS SOCIETY,

" ADMIRALTY,

" LONDON, S.W.1.

*Hon. Treasurer :* Sir W. Graham Greene, K.C.B.,

*Secretary :* W. G. Perrin.

*Resolution passed at a Meeting of the Navy Records Society, December, 1914.*

" The Council of the Navy Records Society desire to offer to the family of the late Admiral Mahan a sincere expression of sympathy and to record their sense of the loss the British Empire has sustained by the termination of the career of one who so generously appreciated the real work of the Royal Navy."

As soon as the news of the sudden and fatal termination of his illness reached the Government in Washington, the Navy Department made this announcement :

“ Admiral Mahan became famous as an author and historian in the early nineties, when his books on *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* and *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution* were published. These were followed by a *Life of Nelson*. These books were classics in their line, and were widely read throughout the world. In England and Germany in particular they received the highest commendation, and in every country possessing a navy they became veritable textbooks in naval strategy. In England the leading naval men of the day confessed that it had remained for him to elucidate the work of the British Navy in a way that they themselves had never understood or even dreamed of.

“ Since his first books he has written many of lesser importance, and these and his essays have kept him before the world as the greatest modern writer on naval strategy. He was a close student of world politics, and his writings on the trend of the politics of the leading nations of the world were accepted as an authority. It may be safely said that no writer of modern times evinced a keener insight in the affairs of the world or expressed himself concerning them more clearly and convincingly than did the late Admiral Mahan.

“ His death will cause international regret, not only because of the high esteem in which he is held in every country of the world interested in naval affairs, but also because of the fact that his death leaves a void among naval and political authorities of the world that no author and writer can fill.”

This expressive letter was written to *The Times* by Mahan's London publisher, Mr. R. B. Marston :

“ SIR,

“ It was with much regret that I saw the announcement in *The Times* of December 2 of the death of Admiral A. T. Mahan, with whom for nearly a quarter

of a century I have had very friendly relations, especially in connection with the publication in this and other countries of his great works on sea power. I should like to add my testimony to the charming courtesy which everyone who had any relations with the Admiral always experienced from him, and also to the fact of his great love and admiration for our country, which he often expressed to me in conversation and in his letters.

“ I am sending the following copy of the last letter I received from him, little more than a month ago, because it is very characteristic, and, coming from such a profound student of naval power, very encouraging for our Empire and our Allies :

“ ‘ MARSHMERE, QUOGUE, LONG ISLAND,

“ ‘ October 14.

“ ‘ DEAR MR. MARSTON,

“ ‘ Many thanks for your letter of September 21, and for clipping enclosed.

“ ‘ Since you wrote, the misfortune to the three A.C.’s [i.e. the armoured cruisers *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir*] has occurred, and I saw yesterday that the Russians had also lost the *Pallada*. I have been surprised myself that such attempts have not been more frequent, and doubtless, if a full return of all submarine prowlings were obtainable, we should find many failures against each success. I have not shared Sir Percy Scott’s dismal forebodings, believing that the question of the submarine would reduce itself to one of scouting and look-out ; yet I have not ventured so positive an adverse opinion as sometimes I see attributed to me. As regards the inactivity of the German Main Fleet, it is to be remembered that it is numerically much inferior. In an article written for one of our weeklies early in the war I gave the opinion that the Germans would first try to reduce the margin against them by torpedo attacks, and possibly by airships, and I have been accordingly surprised that no more has been attempted in the two months intervening. As regards the general course of the war, today’s news is superficially discouraging, and I am disappointed that the Allies should have made so little impression on the lines of the Germans in France, while

these were able to spare men enough to reduce Antwerp. Nevertheless, numbers and money will eventually tell, as in our Civil War, if the Allies persist to the end; and in any case the British Fleet holds the decision in its hands, as in the days of Napoleon. I do not permit myself anxiety, though it is hard to avoid when so interested; besides, I am sure that if Germany wins by a big margin she is likely to be nasty to us. Lord Roberts has a fine chance for "I told you so" as regards the need of your Army for greater numbers, if he wished to be disagreeable.

"Myself and family are very well, though my seventy-four years, now complete, make themselves felt more and more. I have lost perceptibly in physical vigour during the summer. This winter we are to spend in Washington instead of New York, I having been asked to do some research work there.

"With my most earnest interest in your nation's present and future, and my personal regards to yourself,

"Yours sincerely,

"A. T. MAHAN."

"The last time Admiral Mahan was in London he expressed to me his astonishment that our country seemed to be so unaware of or so indifferent to the menacing attitude of Germany, and so deaf to the call of our King to 'Wake up.' It will be seen from his letter that he was under no delusions as to the danger to America should Germany and Austria break our power in this war; in him we have lost a firm friend, a great admirer of our Fleet, and the man whose calm judicial pages are ablaze with its glorious deeds and tremendous world power. It is indeed heartening to know our faith in our Fleet was so fully shared by him.

"I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

"R. B. MARSTON."

"SURREY LODGE, DENMARK HILL, S.E."

In his last illness, after expressing admiration for many beautiful things in the world which in the activities of

life are ordinarily overlooked, Mahan said, "*If a few more quiet years were granted me I might see and enjoy these things, but God is just and I am content.*"

From youth to the mellow autumn days of his earthly existence, he lived the life of an earnest Christian, and died as he had lived, leaving behind him a stainless record.

Well done, Mahan! Rest from your labours. The echo of your fame shall reverberate through the ages, even so long as men go down to the sea in ships. You were a credit to the Green Isle from which your grand-sire came; you rendered an incomparable service to England and to France, whence your mother's forbears sprang; and you have brought honour and renown to America, the land which gave you birth. You were the Rosetta Stone which revealed the hidden language of the seas. Your genius shall continue for all time to inspire those to whom posterity shall entrust the destinies of the great nations of the earth.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### SUMMARY

"It is not given to every author to achieve celebrity in his own lifetime; still more rarely does he live to see his thoughts exercising a profound influence upon the minds of his contemporaries, shaping the evolution of nations, and dictating the policy of their Governments."—AUSTIN TAYLOR, B.A.<sup>1</sup>

"A gentleman, young sir, I take it, is one born with the God-like capacity to think and feel for others, irrespective of their rank or condition. One who possesses an ideal so lofty, a mind so delicate, that it lifts him above all things ignoble, yet strengthens his hands to raise those who are fallen, no matter how low."—JEFFERY FARNOL.

JUST where does Alfred Thayer Mahan stand in the ranks of great men? Greatness is said to consist of a happy combination of commanding attributes of character, activity, and intellect, so rare as to raise their fortunate possessor conspicuously and permanently above the heads of his fellow-men. Under this definition his place is assuredly an exalted one. With but few exceptions, no American in recent times has been accorded so substantial a measure of recognition by accepted authorities in all parts of the world.

To the mass of the people, even to those of the educated classes, the names of the eminent men of other countries, with the possible exception of one or two outstanding personalities, convey little more than the vague impressions created by newspaper reports of their activities from time to time. But the sea is common property, and, moreover, absorbs by far the greater part

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address as President of the Liverpool Philomathic Society.

of the surface of the globe. The subject of maritime control is in consequence one of cardinal and supreme importance to the citizens of all the nations of the earth. The words Sea Power and Mahan—the latter not infrequently mispronounced <sup>1</sup>—are inseparably connected in the public mind, and the reputation of Alfred Thayer Mahan rests upon the substantial fact that in the opinion of those best qualified to pass judgment, he expounded the all-momentous subject of sea power in so masterly and so scientific a fashion as to endow it with a new meaning, the profound significance of which has placed mankind under abundant and permanent obligation to him.

A brief summary of a few of the innumerable expressions of opinion which have appeared in representative publications on both sides of the Atlantic may prove of interest in the pleasing occupation of attempting to assign to Mahan his rightful place in history. It has been said of him :

“ It is hardly too much to say that all modern naval thought has centred around Mahan. His historical insight has made his books indispensable to every student of international affairs. He was the chief inspiration of modern naval strategy. He had a wonderful knack of reducing complicated facts to first principles, and he consequently revolutionised public opinion on naval matters. His books will certainly live in naval literature, for they are based on great truths which have never been so clearly realised before, because they have never before been so well expressed. While historical matter was not new nor details always exact, the picture of the influence and importance of sea power was painted with a vividness, a power of language, and a wealth of illustration which were bound to carry conviction to every understanding mind. He had the power to see clearly and steadily to the heart of things and to allow no

<sup>1</sup> The family pronounce it Mă-hăn': both a's as in "fan" and the accent on the last syllable.

elusive consideration to distract him from essentials. Although a master of war he was no militarist. He possessed the spirit of the historical analyst. The phrase 'Sea Power,' as applied though not invented by him, is one of those happy inspirations of genius which flash the light of philosophy on a whole department of human action. A judicial tone and impartial spirit characterised his writings. No historian and no writer of naval warfare has displayed so profound a grasp of the true meaning of sea power as a determining factor in human affairs. Mahan was incomparably the most brilliant exponent of the philosophy of naval history."

Mahan was, in the best sense of the word, a statesman, which unhappily can be said of but few politicians. One of the essentials of the successful statesman, however, is a capacity to favourably impress men by the power of speech. Those who speak most effectively are wont to become our leaders, *whether we like it or not*, as the late Lord Salisbury used to say. This faculty Mahan did not possess. Moreover, he had a natural distaste for speaking in public, although his European experiences showed that when forced to do so he found no great difficulty in giving a creditable account of himself. It is more than possible that he might have become a good speaker had he been trained from his youth up to "think upon his feet" in such an atmosphere as that of the Debating Societies of the great Public Schools and Universities of England, a fair proportion of whose members ultimately blossom into the great spokesmen of English public life. Mahan was not considered a specially good lecturer, despite the absorbing interest of his subject matter. His dispassionate exposition of the facts of early American history and his genuine admiration for the British Navy no doubt tended to deprive him in his own country of that full measure of popularity and public recognition to which he was so justly entitled.

Irresistible literary tendencies, together with a

natural distaste for the routine and detail inseparable from the command of a battleship—he specially disliked the task of disciplining wayward members of the crew—combined to handicap him in his profession as a practical seaman, although there existed in his day no one more capable of advising upon sound strategy, in the execution of which sailors of the type of Farragut would probably have excelled him. It is only just to state, however, that he never enjoyed an opportunity of proving his ability to command a fleet, or even a battleship, in action. Admiral Bradley Fiske said of him :

“Duty, in whatever form it came, was sacred. Invariably he gave to its performance the best that was in him. That he distinguished himself pre-eminently on shipboard cannot be claimed. Luck or circumstances denied him the opportunity of doing things heroic, and his modesty those purely spectacular. As a subordinate or as captain of a single ship, what he did was well done. No further proof of his qualities in this respect is needed than the fact that, at the outbreak of the Civil War, when finishing his midshipman’s cruise, he was asked by a shipmate, an officer who expected a command, to go with him as ‘first lieutenant.’ To his colleagues of the old Navy this invitation was the highest form of professional approval. The fates decreed that the wider field should not be his wherein, as commander-in-chief of a fleet in war time, he could have exhibited the mastery he surely possessed of that art with which his name will forever be indissolubly linked.”

While the average captain’s mind would be engrossed in contemplation of his ship or the next port to which she was bound and the best and safest means of getting there, Mahan’s mind contemplated navies and envisioned the map of the world, seeking out and placing in its proper sphere and in due degree of importance every strategic point, every trade route, and every national and international influence. As a writer in the *Morning Post* has pointed out, Mahan deals not only with strategy

and tactics, but with the intimate relation existing between national life, national trade, national prosperity, and the use of the sea. What he calls the elements of sea power do not consist solely in fighting ships, or the Navy ; but in trade, geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, number of population, national character, and form of government.

At a meeting of The Royal United Service Institution in 1893, Professor Laughton said :

“ A short time ago I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Captain Mahan, in which he spoke of having different opinions at different times ; that he thought, in military questions, it was not the mean of different opinions which was to be presumed to be the right ; that, more probably, the right is with one or the other of the opposing opinions, according to the different circumstances, but that the mean in all cases is probably wrong. Students of history and strategy and tactics, he thought, should make themselves acquainted with both sides of a question, and be ready, when the time comes, to use that one which is best adapted to the circumstances.”

In stature Mahan was tall and erect, standing well over six feet in height ; of slight build, but wiry and athletic and of distinguished appearance. His eyes, in which a far-away look was at times discernible, were pale blue, and he was of fair complexion, with hair, moustache, and closely trimmed Vandyke beard of sandy colour, which turned white as age advanced. As will be seen from his photographs baldness overtook him in his later years. He was soft and gentle in voice, with a pleasant but reserved manner. It was said of him at The Hague that there was not a little of romance in his eyes, which were tinged with gentle melancholy and had a dreamy far-off look. Not the look of the man at the wheel on the watch for a distant object, but something inward and reflective. Yet there was much strength in the

structure of his face, which betokened firm and persistent purpose. He was so shy that he consistently avoided interviewers, and so conscientious as to being accurately reported that he invariably wrote down anything that was to be published. To intimate friends, however, he was wont to reveal an unsuspected wealth of entertaining stories. Although immaculate in his person, he set no great store by clothes, leaving almost entirely to his wife and daughters the obligation of seeing to it that he was suitably dressed. At The Hague in 1899 he probably escaped their watchful eyes, because close examination of the group in which portraits of the American delegates to the Peace Conference were to be handed down to posterity discloses the fact that he appears to have sat for the photograph in a pair of house slippers! a characteristic touch. As a young officer, however, he feelingly complained of the lack of smartness in the American naval uniform of the day and the consequent sense of uneasiness experienced when mingling with officers of other navies on dressy occasions.

He was a good husband and a kind considerate father, always just, although strict, with his children. He was happy in his home life. He advised Mrs. Vernon-Mann, a close friend of the family, to see that her sons thoroughly understood the meaning of obedience before they were three years old, for he considered that after that age it was too late. For which piece of advice Mrs. Vernon-Mann holds that she is more indebted to him than to all the books she has read about the psychology of children. Mahan was extremely conscientious in training his children, and always took pains to understand their point of view and careful to make his own clear. His method, so far as possible, was to make the child choose what was good, and in punishing to "make the punishment fit the crime." He never punished when angry, but waited until calm and then coolly and im-

partially administered justice—though never forgetting the proper amount of mercy. Again and again his answer to the common complaint of the impossibility of carrying out a command was “Very well, my dear, you needn’t; only you can’t go out until you do,” a method which proved most efficacious. In giving either pleasure or pain his chief aim was to avoid caprice. When his permission was asked for some treat or other, his rule was to inquire, “What does your mother say?” Which once brought from a little daughter who shared with him a knowledge of French <sup>1</sup> the exasperated retort, *À quoi bon les papàs si les mamans arrangent tout?* In every relation of life, both public and private, he governed each act according to his ideas of right and wrong; and nothing was right, in his opinion, that disregarded either justice or truth or charity. He had at times to do very unpleasant things and to inflict pain upon others, but he never shirked doing what he believed to be right.

Mahan was a constant and reliable friend when his confidence was once gained. His apparent aloofness melted into kindness on closer acquaintance, and his personal manners were such as have been said to unlock doors that neither wealth nor position can open. To those who enjoyed the rare privilege of his friendship he was a charming companion. He was a man who strongly believed in vigorous daily exercise, and he would ride his bicycle and walk without undue effort a number of miles that would baffle most men of his age. He considered one of the chief happinesses in life to consist in plenty of occupation. He wrote his superb *Life of Nelson* between his fifty-sixth and fifty-eighth years, and he continued to write for publication until his seventy-third year. Few have such a record to their credit, although delightful old Izaak Walton wrote *The Life of George Herbert* when he was seventy-seven and

<sup>1</sup> Portions of some of his note-books are written in French.



ADMIRAL MAHAN AND HIS GRANDSON.



*The Life of Doctor Sanderson* in his eighty-fifth year. Mahan greatly enjoyed surf bathing and neglected no opportunity for a vigorous swim in the sea. He was fond of riding, although in later life he had few opportunities to indulge in this form of exercise. He created a mild sensation among the more supersensitive of his Long Island neighbours by riding his bicycle in his shirt-sleeves when the weather was sultry.

He was scrupulously honest and punctilious in his personal and official obligations. When in residence as President of the Naval War College at Newport he would not allow his children to use even one of the Government pencils. The members of his family tell amusing stories of the terrors of passing through a Custom House with him owing to the conscientious nature of his dealings with Custom House officials. No trouble was too great to make certain that the information given was absolutely accurate in every detail.

Mahan was of the self-contained type, fully cognisant of what contented him and satisfied his tastes and aspirations. His convictions were based on experience and common sense. Neither prejudice nor partiality influenced his considered judgments. He was fortunately free from the bane of provincialism. Discussing in a letter to a friend the engrossing topic of the choice of a permanent abode in the peaceful autumn days of life, he said :

“ I notice our millionaires are as uneasy as a parched pea—they can do anything they want to, but they don't know what they want. What I know of London I like exceedingly, and if I were entirely free from predisposing causes (which no one is) would, I think, choose it in preference to any place I know for a steady residence.”

He was, on grounds of public policy, opposed to female suffrage. He viewed the outcome with anxiety. Who can now estimate the benefit to the country were the two

outstanding twentieth-century potentialities for good and evil, *the Press* and *Woman Enfranchised*, to devote their incomparable influence and their energies and their ballots to the supreme mission of promoting the welfare of the community?

In a letter to the author, Mr. Arthur Balfour accurately typifies Mahan when he says:

“I have always taken a great interest in Mahan’s work, and count myself among his earliest and most enthusiastic admirers. My personal acquaintance with him was slight; but I do not doubt that his character was admirably reflected in his writings.”

It was. The outstanding features of Mahan’s works are *lucidity and sincerity, crystal clear*, based on sound knowledge and convictions and inspired by the highest ideals. He was entirely frank and open as to his personal inclinations and preferences, and was an avowed admirer of pretty women, as was his father before him. He candidly enjoyed the cheery society of his daughters’ girl friends, and in his letters to his family when he was abroad he was wont to refer with boyish enthusiasm to good-looking women whom he met in Society in England. An indication of the calibre of his personal qualities is afforded by the fact that he won the esteem of worth-while folk.

He was of the distinctly absent-minded type, and following in the footsteps of his father, he would become so absorbed in his thoughts as to render him unconscious of his surroundings. His family could recount many instances of his having complained of not being told of circumstances that had been carefully explained to him on occasions when he was lost in a brown study, immersed doubtless in the convolutions of seventy-four gun ships-of-the-line in some great battle of bygone days. He shared the old salt’s admiration for a sailing ship as a

thing of beauty and life, yet Admiral Bradley Fiske says :

“ Not only have the writings of Mahan brought about an increase in the sea power of every great country ; but this increase has so aroused the attention of the engineering professions that the improvement of ships, engines, and other sea material has gone ahead faster than all the other engineering arts.”

Mahan was at heart a reformer. In the seventies he made heroic attempts to purge the United States Navy of some highly undesirable political influences. A clue to his innate strength of character may be found in this admission, written to a friend when he was a midshipman : “ I believe that my heart once set on a thing, everything save honor, affection, morality, everything becomes subordinate.” It was his persistence in pressing home his incontrovertible arguments that eventually routed the forces of the *Little Navyites* in England.

He had something of the martyr in his composition. In his own words : “ Bitter as was the humiliation, it was less bitter than yielding my convictions would have been. I am so constituted that no advantage can repay me for stifling my sense of right.” His strong aversion to the Turks is emphasised in the following extract : “ I have an intense desire that the Christians may finally drive the Turks out of Europe, and that if England interferes again to uphold the Crescent that she may get a good thrashing, as she will deserve.” He was a keen advocate of Anglo-American friendship. To Mr. Ashe he wrote :

“ To this I would add, throw overboard the Irish vote (if you dare) and pursue a policy not of formal alliance but of close sympathy, based on common ideas of justice, law, freedom, and honesty with England. France is what she has called Albion, ‘ perfide ’—England is like every other nation, selfish ; but in the main honest, and

the best hope of the world is in the union of the branches of that race to which she and we belong.”

Mahan was essentially a *teacher*. Although by no means infallible—as, for instance, in regard to certain incidents of battleship construction and equipment—the chief lessons he taught are imperishable and precious beyond calculation. They have already borne tangible fruit and have contributed more than can be readily estimated towards the success of the gigantic task of saving humanity from passing under the blood-stained heel of Prussianism. No monument, however, has yet been erected to his memory,<sup>1</sup> nor has his family received any substantial recognition of his services to the nation. Time, the great and inevitable adjudicator, will doubtless reveal this world-renowned son of America in his true light.

There is ample evidence that in the last few months of his life Mahan suffered acute mental distress about the war and the part he had played—although entirely unpremeditated—in stimulating the growth of the German Navy, thereby contributing to make possible the crime of August 1914, with its appalling menace to his own country. This anxiety doubtless reacted upon his powers of physical resistance and tended to hasten his end. A century ago Napoleon said he was *not a man but an event*. In the light of the dramatic naval events of the colossal upheaval of this century, Mahan was *both*. The study of most history is a matter of education and training, the study of Mahan is a matter of national safety.

Alfred Thayer Mahan will live in the memory of the ages. He was a courteous, dignified, well-bred man of irreproachable character and deeply religious nature. Reserved and retiring, given to silence and profound thought, yet inwardly enjoying an appreciative sense of

<sup>1</sup> One of the new American destroyers has been named *Mahan*.

humour. He was pre-eminently a just man, and was of generous disposition. Throughout his life his actions were controlled by an all-determining devotion to duty. He conscientiously resisted and brought into subjection an inherited predisposition towards irritability of temper. He was modest and unassuming, but a stranger to fear. Exceptionally energetic, both mentally and physically, he was well able to hold his own in any company when occasion demanded. He was a philosopher rather than an historian; a strategist rather than a tactician; brilliant in the supreme council chamber rather than on the quarter-deck; a statesman, not a politician; a controversialist, not a debater. He acquired imperishable fame by bringing new-world ingenuity to bear upon the treatment and presentation of old-world historical facts of supreme importance. As an exponent of sea power he stands without a peer in the annals of literature.

As in past days of unhappy conflict, so in approaching years of joyous peace, nay rather as long as this globe and its myriad watery highways endure, men shall acclaim the great American naval philosopher, whose genius immeasurably contributed to save modern civilisation through the mighty influence of sea power, with which for all time shall be associated the name of Mahan.

## APPENDIX

### BRITAIN AND THE GERMAN NAVY

#### ADMIRAL MAHAN'S WARNING

*The "Daily Mail," Wednesday, July 6, 1910. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Editor of the "Daily Mail."*

THE huge development of the German Navy within the past decade, and the assurance that the present rate of expenditure—over £20,000,000 annually—will be maintained for several years to come, is a matter of general international importance. Elsewhere, and in another connection, I have had occasion to point out, in the American Press, that the question immediately raised is not what Germany means to do with this force, which already is second only to that of Great Britain, and for which is contemplated a further large expansion. The real subject for the reflection of every person, statesman or private, patriotically interested in his country's future, is the ample existence present, and still more prospective, of a new international factor, to be reckoned with in all calculations where oppositions of national interests may arise.

From this point of view it is not particularly interesting to inquire whether Germany has any far-reaching purposes of invading Great Britain or of dismembering her Empire; nor yet whether, on the other side of the ocean, she purposes no longer in future contingencies to show that respect for the Monroe doctrine which she hitherto has observed, much to American satisfaction. Americans, while giving full credit to Germany for the most friendly intentions towards them, have to note that in the future she can do as she pleases about the Monroe doctrine, so far as our intended organisation of naval force goes, because she will be

decidedly stronger at sea than we in the United States expect to be, and we have over her no military check such as the interests of Canada impose upon Great Britain.

### THE RIGHT ATTITUDE FOR GREAT BRITAIN

Similarly, the people of Great Britain should not depend upon apprehension of Germany's intentions to attack in order to appraise their naval necessities and awaken their determinations. Resolutions based upon such artificial stimulus are much like the excitement of drink, liable to excess in demonstration, as well as to misdirection and ultimate collapse in energy, as momentary panic is succeeded by reaction. Unemotional business-like recognition of facts, in their due proportions, befits national policies, to be followed by well-weighed measures corresponding to the exigency of the discernible future. This is the manly way, neither over-confident nor over-fearful; above all, not agitated. Of such steadfast attitude, timeliness of precaution is an essential element. Postponement of precaution is the sure road to panic in emergency. An English naval worthy of two centuries ago aptly said, "It is better to be afraid now than next summer when the French fleet will be in the Channel."

In this characteristic of precautionary action a democracy like that of Great Britain stands at a grave disadvantage towards a people like the German, accustomed to a strong Government. A German writer<sup>1</sup> has said recently, "In Germany we hold a strong *independent* Government, *assisted* by a democratic Parliament, to be a better scheme than the continual change of party rule customary in England." This was substantially the view of James I and Charles I in England, and we know what came of it; but it is the German position to-day. Few Englishmen or Americans will accept it; I certainly do not; but for the organisation of force in the hands of a capable Government, such as that of Germany has shown itself hitherto to be, the scheme is much more efficient, because the plain people of a parliamentary country—the voters—refuse to think about international or military

<sup>1</sup> Hans Delbrück, *Contemporary Review*, October 1909, p. 406. My italics.

matters. Yet it is they who make and unmake Governments, now one party, now the other ; and the Government's outlook upon international preparation is always qualified by a look over the shoulder at the voters. This is much less the case where the people have behind them the tradition of being disregarded comparatively. True, no Government, not the most autocratic, can wholly disregard national feeling. The question is one of more or less ; and as between Germany and Great Britain, Government in Germany is, as Government, much more efficient for organised action, even though it make less for the kind of development which follows personal freedom from constraint.

#### THE NAVY BECOMING LESS POPULAR

This is the fundamental condition which the British democracy of to-day have to recognise as regards their national security, upon which their economic future—their food, clothing, and housing—depends : that they stand face to face with a nation one-fourth more numerous than themselves, and one more highly organised for the sustainment by force of a national policy. It is so because it has a Government more efficient in the ordering of national life, in that it can be, and is, more consecutive in purpose than one balanced unsteadily upon the shoulders of a shifting popular majority. Fortunately for Great Britain the popular tradition of the national need for a great Navy still supplies to some extent and for the moment a steadying hand ; but to one following from a distance the course of British action in late years it certainly has seemed that this conviction is less operative ; that its claims to allegiance are less felt and more disputed. Yet, in case of national reverse, following upon national failure to prepare, it is the democracy, the voters, who will be responsible ; the voters also who will suffer.

The prolonged formal peace which Europe has enjoyed for thirty years affords a precise illustration of the ineffectiveness of populates to realise external dangers. Continuance of peace induces a practical disbelief in the possibility of war, and practical disbeliefs soon result in practical action, or non-action. Yet observant men know that there have been at least three wars in this so-called period of peace ; wars

none the less because no blows were exchanged, for force determined the issues. The common phrase for such transactions is "the risk of war has been averted." The expression is dangerously misleading, because it is supposed that the controlling element in this conclusion has been the adroitness of statesmen, whereas the existence and calculation of force have been really determinative. Force, too, not merely in the raw material, but the organised force of armies and navies ready—or unready—to move. "I had thought," wrote the American General Sherman, "that the War of Secession was settled by the armed forces of the nation, but at a recent public dinner of lawyers I have learned that it was done by the Courts."

#### THE WEAKNESS OF INSULAR COMMUNITIES.

Such misconception is peculiarly liable to arise in communities insular by position like Great Britain, or remote from the great nations of the world as is the United States. The measure of security from external aggression which such conditions confer—the "water-walled bulwark" of Shakespeare—favours greatly that free internal development for which democracy is probably the most effective of instruments. But the sense of this security, removing the pressure felt by less happily situated peoples, begets an optimistic attitude towards external dangers, fostering unreadiness for war at the same time that it lessens dependence upon organised government. Other national qualities being equal, Continental frontiers promote the establishment of government effective for external action. As we all know, the Roman democracy illustrated this fact by the institution of the dictatorship for emergencies.

For these reasons insular democracies are lax and inefficient in preparation for war, and in natural consequence their wars have been long and expensive. But wars in the future cannot be long, though they may be expensive: expensive of much beside their immediate cost; expensive in advantages lost and in indemnities exacted. Democracies can no longer afford to neglect preparation, relying upon their strength of endurance and faculty for recovery which probably may exceed that of less free institutions. The

time for recovery will not be conceded to them any more than it is by a capable general to a routed foe. The only provision of time for recovery open to modern conditions is the time of preparation.

What reason is there in the nature of things that the British democracy should not maintain an Army proportionally as great as that of Germany? None, except that the British democracy will not. The national wealth is vastly greater; but notwithstanding this, which indicates not only a certain greater power but a much greater stake, the national will so to prepare does not exist. Many distinguished Englishmen advocate measures tending to this result—to the nation in arms; but I doubt if anyone outside of Great Britain expects to see it.

There remains the Fleet; and it is the privilege of insular democracies that they can pursue the quiet tenor of their way behind the bulwark of a fleet efficient in numbers—that is, in great preponderance—as well as in intrinsic worth. But note that a State thus favoured is militarily in the same position essentially as one that hires an army of mercenaries. The only difference is that the seamen are fellow citizens; an immense distinction, it will be granted, but it does not invalidate the fact that the mass of citizens are paying a body of men to do their fighting for them. It follows that the least the mass can do in self-respect as for security is to pay amply and timely for the efficiency of the body they thus employ. If they do not pay “with their persons,” as the French say, they should with their cash. But the only adequate payment is timely payment—preparation.

#### GREAT BRITAIN'S UNPARALLELED PROBLEM

Democracies have had various tasks thrown upon them at various times, but never perhaps one equal in difficulty to that which confronts the democracy of Great Britain. As it now stands the British Empire territorially is an inheritance from times not democratic, and the world is interested to see whether the heir will prove equal to his fortune. There are favourable signs; one of the most so that has met my eye has been the decision of the Labour Government in Australia that in time of war the Australian Navy should be

at the absolute disposal of the British Admiralty. Such sentiment, realised in commensurate action, is effective imperial democracy. But my reading has not found the corresponding reflection of this determination in the British Labour Party at home ; rather, it has seemed to me, a disposition to undervalue the necessity of preponderant naval force even in European waters.

The security of the British Empire, taken as a whole with many parts, demands first the security of the British Islands as the corner stone of the fabric ; and, second, the security of each of the outlying parts. This means substantially British control, in power if not in presence, of the communications between the central kingdom and the Dominions. This relation is essentially the same as that of a military base of operations to the front of the operations themselves.

#### THE NEW GROUPING

In the present condition of Europe the creation of the German Fleet, with its existing and proposed development, has necessitated the concentration in British waters of more than four-fifths of the disposable British battle force. These facts constitute Germany the immediate antagonist of Great Britain. I do not say for a moment that this manifests Germany's purpose ; I simply state the military and international fact without inference as to motives. The geographical situation of the two States reproduces precisely that of England and Holland in the early days of Cromwell. It was not till the nations had fought and the Dutch were reduced, less by battle than by trade destruction, that the relief of pressure in the North Sea enabled English action abroad. This result was attained more satisfactorily forty years later by the alliance of the two States under the impulse of a great common danger ; but whether that alliance would have been feasible without the antecedent settlement by trial of strength is disputable. In the course of the earlier war the Mediterranean was abandoned by the English Navy in order to concentrate in home waters, and this concentration, coupled with the commanding position of the British Islands with reference to Dutch trade routes, determined then the issue.

The British Navy to-day has in great degree abandoned the Mediterranean for a similar concentration. Over four-fifths of the battleship force is in the "Home" and "Atlantic" divisions. The Mediterranean has fallen from eleven battleships in 1899 to six in 1910, and these six are of distinctly inferior power. What is the contemporary significance of this fact reproductive of a situation near three centuries ago? Constitutive, too, of a situation now novel; for during more than two centuries British preponderance in the Mediterranean has been a notable international factor. The significance, as read by an outsider, is that in the opinion of the Government, under present conditions of preparation, the security of the British Islands requires the weakening, almost to abandonment, of the most delicate, yet very essential link in the system of communications of the Empire.

It is entirely true that for the moment the naval concentration at home, coupled with the tremendous positional advantage of Great Britain over German trade routes, constitutes a great measure of security; and, further, that the British waters, occupied as they now are, do effectually interpose between Germany and the British oversea Dominions. The menacing feature in the future is the apparent indisposition and slackness of the new voters of the last half-century over against the resolute spirit and tremendous faculty for organising strength evident in Germany.

### THE FUTURE PERIL

An examination of present and probable future European international relations is plainly incompatible with my space; but speaking as an onlooker, studying these, and following the tone as well as the words of parliamentary debates, I have thought to see the growth of a spirit which threatens to leave Great Britain unprepared to hold her own, and to sustain her Empire in the very probable contingencies ahead. Impelled to weigh these seriously, the impression has gained ground, against a steady previous conviction that Great Britain would prove equal to her fortunes.

In a recent American magazine <sup>1</sup> a German writer, reported

<sup>1</sup> *McClure's Magazine*, June 1910, p. 223. "The United States and the War Cloud in Europe." By Theodor Schiemann.

to be a trusted confidential friend of the Emperor, has said, "The weak man cannot trust his judge, and the dream of the peace advocate is nothing but a dream." The concentration of the battle fleet in home waters is correct; the relative abandonment of the Mediterranean for that purpose, if for the moment only, is likewise correct, especially as the "Atlantic" fleet may be considered an intermediate body, a reserve, able to move eastward or southward as conditions require; but the clear reluctance to acquiesce in present naval requirements is ominous of a day when the Mediterranean may pass out of the sphere of British influence, centred round the British Islands exclusively. This will symbolise, if it does not at once accompany, the passing of the Empire; for a hostile force in the Mediterranean controls not only an interior line—as compared with the Cape route—but an interior position, from which it is operative against the Atlantic as well as in the East.

It is difficult to overstate the effect of this upon the solidity of the Empire, for the Mediterranean is one of the great central positions of the maritime world. A weakened Mediterranean force is the symptom that neither as principal nor as ally may Great Britain be able to play the part hitherto assumed by her in the great drama of which the awakening of the East is the present act; while among the *dramatis personæ* are Egypt, India, Australia, and New Zealand.

A. T. MAHAN.

## BRITAIN AND THE WORLD'S PEACE. THE SALVATION FROM WAR, IS READINESS FOR WAR

BY ADMIRAL A. T. MAHAN, U.S.N.

*The "Daily Mail," October 31, 1910. Reproduced by courtesy of the Editor of the "Daily Mail"*

IN an article, "Britain and the German Navy," published in the *Daily Mail* of July 6, I said quite incidentally that "an examination of present and probable future European international relations was incompatible with the space" demanded by the subject immediately in hand. I have been asked to develop the thought underlying this remark.

In a study of the interest of America in international conditions, made several months ago and passing through the Press as I now write, I ventured to remark that, whatever the internal troubles or external ambitions of Austria-Hungary, she is bound to Germany by nearness, by inferior power, and by interests partly common to the two States, as surely as the moon is bound to the earth and with it constitutes a single group in the planetary system. I have consequently been interested and instructed to observe in *The Times* of September 21 that, on the occasion of the German Emperor's recent visit to Vienna, "the standpoint everywhere adopted by the Viennese Press," presumably representative of public opinion, "is that, in view of the support unhesitatingly given by the German Emperor to Austria-Hungary in the annexation crisis, the Austro-German alliance has been recognised by the world to be an institution so compactly built that the countries forming it belong in some measure to each other."

#### THE POSITION OF AUSTRIA

The simile, therefore, is justified by the appreciation of the weaker party to the combination. Whatever the internal clashes of the somewhat loosely united districts and variant races that constitute Austria-Hungary, they have in their neighbour Servia a perpetual reminder of the lot awaiting small communities when they desire to remain independent and yet be considered by the world. The lesson has been emphasised by the inability of Greece and Crete to draw their chestnuts out of the fire of the Turkish Revolution, as compared with the success attending Bulgaria and Austria in the same crisis; while, more recently still, the adverse action of Roumania towards Bulgaria in behalf of the Turk indicates the troubles that might befall the Austrian provinces if deprived of the common tie of a common Sovereign. The present weight of Germany in international relations, the outgrowth of the past century, is chiefly due to the realisation of the value of union by many small States once independent and discordant.

However imperfect and dissentient the internal union of the Austrian Empire, it is for each of the constituent mem-

bers better than dissolution of the existing bond. Similarly, the alliance with Germany, though the latter be necessarily the preponderant partner, is better than isolation in presence of powerful neighbours and of the unstable conditions of the Balkans. Not that the inequality between the two constitutes a condition of protector and protected. The reciprocity of benefit was gracefully admitted by the German Emperor in his speech at Vienna. "The alliance has, to the weal of the world, passed into and, like an imponderable element, pervaded the convictions and the life of both peoples."

#### THE MOTIVE OF ALLIANCES

This reciprocity of benefit means, of course, community of interest, and interest is the sole stable element in the relations of States. No man has lived to be old without abundant occasion to recognise the instability of other motives in the actions of bodies politic. In the case of Austria-Hungary and Germany this community of interest depends largely upon nearness, upon continuousness of territory—often a source of disagreements, but not so when both parties are subject to strong external pressures and dangers, or when their respective desires tend to ends which will be mutually beneficial. There need only be mentioned Russia, the Balkans, and the controlling position of Great Britain over the sea communications of Germany, to show that in the mere nature of things strong external pressures exist for both allies; a condition emphasised by the artificial factor of the Triple Entente. So each step in the southward pressing of Austria-Hungary will inure to the benefit of the German Empire by causing the alliance to span more effectively the space between the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the North Sea; while Austria-Hungary herself will gain in international consideration should she succeed in achieving an open coast frontier on the Mediterranean equivalent to that of Germany on the North Sea. The centre of gravity around which the alliance revolves will be shifted if the smaller should attain the maritime development which, above all other single factors, constitutes now the unity of the German Empire.

The ultimate result now is, and for an unmeasurable future

must be, to confirm the alliance, which may be defined most accurately as that of Middle Europe. In my judgment, this is the one great determinative factor in the present and prospective international relations of Europe. But while this is the main central fact, the unencumbered realisation of which is essential to clear appreciation, it is itself surrounded by an intricate complexity of circumstances, not necessarily arising from it, even indirectly, but yet inevitably affected by it, as the movements of the heavenly bodies are by the omnipresent influence of gravity, modifying or disturbing their proper motions. All Europe, and because all Europe the whole world, is swayed in some measure by the existing solidarity of Middle Europe, with its immense organisation of force.

#### TURKEY AND THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

A striking illustration of such effect is the rumoured, and probable, attraction of the new Turkish Government towards the Triple Alliance. Whether true or not, and to whatsoever extent advanced, it is in the nature of things that relative geographical situation, together with the consolidated power of Middle Europe, should create this deflection from the groupings of the Crimean War. Russia has been critically weakened by her recent war, a result to which Great Britain contributed decisively by her treaty with Japan; and the weakness of Russia has meant a great increase in strength to the Mid-Europe Alliance. Sixty years ago, Russia being mighty, and Prussia and Austria having clashing interests, Turkey in her distress turned naturally to the Western Powers for aid, and these, controlling the sea, were able to place their armies on shores where no opposing forces were to be feared save the immediate enemy, and he compelled there to exertions more remote from the centre of his strength than they from theirs, in that his lines of communication were more arduous. To-day, if serious troubles should arise in that tinder-box the Near East, the only great land power capable of exertion on the spot is that of the Triple Alliance. This, by numbers and organisation, so overbears all competitors, or any possible combination of competitors, that it is completely master of the situation on shore. It is so because Russia for the moment is eliminated. Singly,

even without her recent defeats, she might not have equalled the alliance ; but allied to France she would have constituted a menace so serious as to qualify decisively all opposing action. The Triple Entente was born too late. It should have antedated, not postdated, the Russo-Japanese War.

### INDIA AND EGYPT

Another direct result of that war has been to precipitate the commotion in Eastern nationalities, of which the " unrest " of India and Egypt are conspicuous instances. These are so much in the public eye as to need no insistence, save to remark that they affect the Powers of Western Europe mainly in a weakening direction ; whereas for those of Middle Europe, which have small possessions in the East, they constitute the opportunity which, when waters are troubled, is associated proverbially with those who have not. They stand to lose nothing, with the possibility of gaining something, as Austria-Hungary has done by the incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is trite to repeat the frequent remark that detached and dispersed possessions, like those of the British Empire and of France, are positions of exposure ; but it is expedient to bear in mind that they are doubly so when popular disaffection or the seeds of such disaffection exist in them.

It is impossible, I suppose, to prevent ill-feeling when a new and powerful rival appears upon the scene of commerce. It can rarely soothe the feelings to be disturbed in the possession of that which one has come to regard as secure ; and history seems to demonstrate that, while great Navies may be called into being without an immediate necessity for the protection of shipping—as is now the case in the United States and has been in Russia—the development of a mercantile marine is followed pretty surely by the creation of a Navy to safeguard it.

### THE COMING OF THE DREADNOUGHT

Given these conditions, the existing rivalry between Great Britain and Germany was pretty sure to result in ill-feeling, and gradually to be exasperated. Then the adoption of the

Dreadnought, instituting a new type of warship, has enabled Germany to enter upon a race of construction, with but little start against her, in the struggle to be preponderant at the future moment when the ante-Dreadnoughts shall be confessedly obsolete. The competition in all directions has been severe, and is closer and more threatening because Great Britain has not attained, and cannot in any near future attain, the organising governmental control over the exertions of her people that Germany is able to exercise, giving concentration of purpose and continuousness of aim.

The inter-relations of the European States at any particular moment constitute the basis, the military base, upon which rests the influence of Europe as a whole upon the politics of the world. In that grouping, at the present time, the central and preponderant fact is the Mid-Europe Alliance, not only because it is the greatest single factor, but because it alone is a strictly natural combination. The adhesion to it of Italy has, indeed, reasons of policy, but they are complex and alloyed: "partly iron, partly miry clay." The Triple Entente is purely artificial; a result of the Mid-Europe Alliance itself, but without the intrinsic strength. It is a reaction from the Alliance; but in this case reaction does not equal action in power. Its one leading motive is opposition—defensive; and it is a commonplace that mere opposition, simple defence, is not in progressive force the equivalent of a positive policy. To an aggressive action, such as the annexations of 1908, mere opposition wavers in its parry, especially when two or more parties have to agree upon a common course, in determining which each remembers its particular interests. I am not here pronouncing an opinion upon the propriety of the annexations, but merely noting an illustration of a general fact, to be observed in most combinations the motive to which is not action but opposition; negative, not positive.

#### THE GERMAN ARMY TO-DAY

The weakness due to lack of unanimity of aims, and of consequent motive, is increased by the geographical distribution of the members of the Triple Entente, and the effect of that upon their aggregate military strength. The territory

of Austria-Hungary and Germany forms a continuous mass, closely linked up by a highly developed railway system, in the designing of which strategic considerations as well as commercial have had a large share. The present generation of the German Army has had little fighting, but its reputation as a highly trained and efficient organisation is unimpaired; while under the test of mobilisation, at the time of the annexations, that of Austria-Hungary is said to have given satisfactory proofs. In view of the late war, the same can scarcely be assumed as to the Russian Army. Upon that of France I am incompetent to form an opinion.

Granting it, however, to be equivalent in efficiency to those of the Mid-Europe monarchies, there is great disparity of numbers, and an impossibility of the cohesive action between Russia and France that is open to Austria-Hungary and Germany. In short, the latter possess central position and interior lines against the other two, assuming the several groups to be enemies, as they are internationally antagonistic for the moment.

Such military conditions are, and always must be, operative political considerations, in peace as in war. Such circumstances govern the world now as they have in the past. They are the instruments, or it may be the fetters, of the statesman's policy. Perfect assurance may be felt on all parts that war with a strong Power will not be provoked in this age by any Government, unless it be one of fatalistic tendency and somewhat desperate fortunes, in which case willingness would be a misnomer for necessity. The balance of forces influences continually and decisively the solutions of diplomacy; and such a condition is really war, even though no shot be fired. It is the balance of forces, realised in the preparations for war, which now makes war an alternative not to be adopted without a shudder. It was not so in days of less elaborate and costly development of fighting power.

#### THE BRITISH NAVY

If this view be correct, and he will be a bold man who can dispute it in the face of the decade just past, the balance of force discernible in the present and near future will influence

decisively the outcome of present political conditions in Europe, in the Mediterranean, and to the east of Suez. Some of the leading elements have been stated. One has been reserved to the last ; that is, the British Navy. For the present and near future the British Army seems not more than adequate to imperial responsibilities, unless some rare opportunity should offer, such as the past has known, where a corps comparatively small produces, by virtue of its position, effects disproportionate to its size. But, putting aside the defence of the British Islands, as a consideration respectable but inadequate to a comprehensive defence of British interests, the British Navy, if maintained in due strength, holds in its hands the commercial communications of Europe so long as the political lines of division indicated by the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente endure. It never again will be possible for the British Navy to control the commerce of the whole world, nor of the whole European continent ; but under the Triple Entente it remains possible to Great Britain to control the maritime situation, because by that entente the naval forces possible to be arrayed against her are limited to numbers over which she can decisively preponderate if she firmly so decides.

The stress I have laid upon land power typified in Armies, frees me from assent to the extreme doctrines of the Blue Water and Fleet-in-Being schools, to which my advocacy of sea power has perhaps seemed to associate me. Yet I believe it remains true that Navies dominate the communications of sea commerce, and through them the financial prosperity of countries, upon which depend not only the maintenance of land war but the reasonable welfare of populations. The Continental system of Napoleon is the extreme example of the effect of such control. During that period sea power and land power, in as extreme expression as they have ever attained, were arrayed against each other ; and sea power won, not by a combination of accidents, but by a logical sequence of events. It might fairly be said that then commerce as a factor dominated war, and so it ever will be when a contest between the two is stripped of confusing accessories and they appear to the mind in their respective nakedness and power.

## FRANCE'S MONEY AND BRITAIN'S SHIPS

The massed land power of Mid-Europe and its political gravitative effect upon the chief centres of European unsettlement in South-Eastern Europe have been indicated. Over against it stands no equivalent land power, even if, in circumstances threatening a general conflagration, there are elements of such in France and Russia, which, though inferior, must weigh heavily with a statesman envisaging war. But the real offset against the military power of the Triple Alliance is the financial resources of France and the Navy of Great Britain. The two together represent sea power in the scales of Europe, as Middle Europe represents land power. As usual, neither stands alone, wholly separated from the other. The Army of France is a large factor in land power; that of Great Britain one not wholly negligible; and in naval force Germany now stands second in the world. But, despite this allowance, the broad division stands. Now, should occasion arise, the Navy of Great Britain, if duly maintained, controls the approaches to the German coast, and by such control secures the communications of the British Islands with the whole world—except perhaps the Baltic. This means, substantially, the suppression of German sea-borne commerce, the extent of which is little realised. With the world outside Europe this increased between 1894 and 1904 by 93 per cent., with Europe by 68 per cent.; whereas the land interchange with Europe increased only 48 per cent.

The maintenance of this sea trade depends upon shipping, and it is to be remarked that war with Great Britain eliminates at once, as carriers to Germany, the two principal mercantile marines—the British and the German. France, with her entente sympathies and traditional grievances, will not greatly object to measures which will eliminate also her merchant vessels, already and otherwise sufficiently employed. The United States has none but coastwise shipping, also fully employed, and is not likely to insist strongly upon a privilege of supplying Germany with ships. There remains no strong naval Power to object to the most serious repressive measures that Great Britain may undertake within the limits of International Law, broadly interpreted.

## GERMANY'S NAVAL POLICY

There is little cause for wonder, then, that Germany is contracting debt in order to strengthen her Navy. The wonder is that intelligent men in Great Britain should be found to ignore these facts, and to advocate immunity from the incidence of war for sea-borne commerce, under the delusive definition of "private property."

As a student of military and naval history, it is to me certain that the advantages of the situation, regarded as commercial and military, are almost wholly with Great Britain, granting the continuance of the present laws of capture; and the German strenuousness in naval development silently confirms this contention. The reply that a continental country can repair this disadvantage through its continental frontiers is so flagrant an ignoring of facts as to be scarcely worthy of respectful consideration. Such a country can live, yes; but when it has built up a huge, complex industrial and commercial system, based upon the sea, it cannot sustain such cut off from the sea. Railroads, by the very nature of things, cannot alone replace the copiousness of water traffic, and, besides, they are rarely more than commensurate to a certain maximum of carriage dependent upon known normal conditions. The suppression of sea communications, total or approximate, means now, as it always has meant, financial disorganisation, military embarrassment, and popular misery.

These things are not said to incite strife, for indeed they are not new, even if ignored. I would now, as I hoped ten years ago, that things had taken a different turn. But as they are, it is in the interests of peace to point out that no force in Europe can so act as a deterrent from war, induced by the possible ambitious or otherwise inevitable tendencies of Middle Europe, as can the Navy of Great Britain. The dividing line cleft between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente is too plain to be ignored. It has been emphasised at Algeçiras, in Crete, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in other incidents less conspicuous but equally known. Under such circumstances the one salvation from war is readiness for war, based upon a clear appreciation of what can best be done and what should most be feared.

STATEMENT ISSUED TO THE PRESS BY ADMIRAL  
MAHAN ON AUGUST 3, 1914: THE DAY BEFORE  
THE DECLARATION OF WAR BY GREAT  
BRITAIN.

"THE aggressive insolence of Austria's ultimatum to Servia, taken with the concession by the latter of all the demands except those too humiliating for national self-respect, indicate that the real cause of the war is other than set forth by the ultimatum.

"Knowing from past experience how the matter must be reviewed by Russia, it is incredible that Austria would have ventured on the ultimatum unless assured beforehand of the consent of Germany to it. The inference is irresistible that the substance of the ultimatum was the pretext for a war already determined on as soon as plausible occasion offered.

"The cause of this predetermination is to be found in the growing strength of Russia on recovering from her war with Japan. With the known deficiencies of French armaments, which were recently admitted, the moment was auspicious for striking down France and Russia before they regained strength. The motives are to be found in Austria's apprehension of the growing Slav power in the south and that of Germany concerning Russia on the east.

"Great Britain as the third member of the Entente finds herself in the position of Prussia in 1805, when she permitted Napoleon to strike down Austria unaided and was herself struck down the following year at Jena: or of that of France in 1866, when she stood by while Prussia crushed Austria and was herself overwhelmed in 1870.

"Germany's procedure is to overwhelm at once by concentrated preparation and impetuous momentum. If she fail in this she is less able to sustain prolonged aggression, as was indicated in the Franco-Prussian War during and after the siege of Paris.

"The British fleet, which is superior to that of Germany, has the power to prevent all commerce under the German flag, and, by blockade, to close against neutrals all the rivers properly German except those emptying into the Baltic. The British fleet is not strong enough to divide for blockade

in both Baltic and North Seas. The Rhine, emptying through neutral Holland, cannot be blockaded.

"If the first German rush prove indecisive or prolonged, the financial pressure thus in the power of Great Britain may determine the issue, or may force the German fleet to fight, in which case the issues will be determined by battle.

"If Germany succeeds in downing both France and Russia, she gains a respite by land, which may enable her to build up her sea force equal, or superior to that of Great Britain.

"In that case the world will be confronted by the naval power of a state, not, like Great Britain, sated with territory, but one eager and ambitious for expansion, eager also for influence. This consideration may well affect American sympathies.

"In my judgment, a right appreciation of the situation should determine Great Britain to declare war at once. Otherwise, her entente engagements, whatever the letter, will be in spirit violated, and she will earn the entire distrust of all probable future allies.

"Italy likewise owes it to herself to declare war against her recent allies. In co-operation with France, and with Greece, reinforced by the two American battleships just purchased, she can doubtless maintain the balance of maritime power in the Mediterranean, prevent the Turks giving their expected support to Germany, keep quiet the Bulgarians, if these are so ill-advised as to purpose a diversion in favor of Austria, and, in brief, consolidate the opposition of the Balkan States to Austria-Hungary, whose ambitions are notoriously inconsistent with those of Italy."

### "THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS"<sup>1</sup>

EXTRACTS FROM AN ARTICLE BY CHARLES STEWART  
DAVISON, NEW YORK

It is to be hoped that there may be no hasty expression of view nor public committal of the country to any specific doctrine in relation to America's attitude on "The Freedom of the Seas" until opportunity shall have occurred for full conference and consideration. There is a point in relation

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced by the courtesy of Mr. Charles Stewart Davison.

to the question of our attitude as a nation on this subject which should be taken under advisement. The major and controlling differentiation between private property on land and private property at sea is wholly overlooked in the proposition that the latter, when not contraband of war, should be exempted from capture or destruction by belligerents if we are to understand that we are therein seeking complete immunity for private property at sea.

The instructions to the American delegates to the first Hague Conference in 1899 did not, in fact, go quite to that extent. They were to the effect that what was sought was the same immunity of destruction or capture "which such property already enjoys on land."

Popularly this has been construed as a demand for complete immunity, and it is fair to say that the proposition was so phrased or formulated by Secretary Marcy in 1856 as to tend to sustain this popular construction of the instructions which we gave to our Hague delegates, for our refusal in 1856 to sign the agreement of the Paris Conference in relation to the abandonment of privateering was qualified by a proffer to assent thereto provided it was also agreed that "private property of subjects and citizens of a belligerent on the high seas shall be exempted from seizure by public armed vessels of the other belligerent, except it be contraband." It will be noted that the position which we took in 1899 does not go to the full extent of our proposition of 1856. The latter asks for absolute immunity for private property not contraband at sea. The former asks only for the same immunity which such property already enjoys on land.

Now, private property on land in time of war does not enjoy under the laws of war total immunity from destruction or capture, therefore, the analogy supposed to be appealed to fails. Private property on land is subject, in gross, to requisitions for the support of armies, etc. The burdens placed in time of war on private property on land must, then, if we are to proceed on analogies, find their parallel in the placing of some equivalent burdens on private property at sea, and the major premise in the argumentative instructions disappears. But the great distinction or discrimination—which, if we took the view ordinarily entertained of the 1899

instructions, would be wholly overlooked—is found in the fact that private property on land, where its location is embraced within territory occupied by a belligerent, is stationary, and by the occupation of the land such private property ceases to be an available source of strength to the enemy, and, therefore—no longer contributing to the enemy's substance nor capable of further forwarding his warlike effort—no military reason exists which would justify its expropriation except to the extent of the support of the invading army, and to that extent, in the shape of reasonable requisitions, it is subject thereto as also to destruction on retiring, if it would be of advantage to the enemy in a military sense. On the other hand, private property at sea is in transit as part of an enemy's trade. Its arrival at destination and its sale and the receipt by an individual enemy of its monetary value enhance the resources of the enemy, benefit him and aid in maintaining or increasing his resistance and warlike effort.

This is the fundamental difference between enemy private property on land embraced within territory occupied by a belligerent's forces and enemy private property at sea. The one is rendered innocuous by the occupation of the territory where it is located, the other, if immune from capture, would remain an active element in the enemy's capacity for offence and defence. It might therefore be argued that it would be well to permit of the capture and retention of the vessel and the storage of the goods, or, if perishable, their sale and the holding of the proceeds to be returned to the private owner at the conclusion of the war, but not for immunity from seizure.

It is also to be observed that in addition to the goods the vessel itself, that is, its use, is an object of value to the enemy. The particular voyage on which it is engaged at any given time is presumably not the last voyage which any given vessel would have an opportunity of making during the continuance of hostilities, in its capacity of being an element of commercial resources of the enemy. A belligerent should therefore be entitled to exercise such control as may be necessary to prevent this result. Again, assuming that the vessel safely returned to the belligerent's country, it would become available for the transportation of troops and

munitions. Its use would, therefore, in the first instance aid in maintaining the enemy's general resources, and in the second instance would directly aid in his warlike effort. Against both of these uses the other belligerent should be entitled to protect himself by capture.

There should, therefore, be no blind adoption nor hasty acquiescence in a policy which is not founded on reason and one which, to the extent to which it has at any time been deemed American policy, has been founded upon a misapprehension of the fundamental considerations involved.

It cannot be said that the laws of war either at sea or on land are founded on fantastic considerations. Each gain in the direction of amelioration of the conditions of war has been made only where it has been capable of demonstration that the step advocated did not involve any concession to the enemy's efficiency or any augmenting of the enemy's resources in the then present war. They have all had sound reason along these lines in their support. This one suggestion of immunity at sea has not sound reason underlying it, but is a fantastic step, basing its claims to consideration on quasi-humanitarian or, rather, on a fictitious application of such views and on an entire failure to consider a fundamental distinction.

So far as the attitude which we took in 1899 is concerned, it is possible that there was a certain amount of German influence mingled therein. It may be that we were at least strengthened in our views thereby, possibly quite unconsciously to ourselves, for at the time that our proposals in this direction were put forward Germany offered to acquiesce if contraband and blockade were included, or, rather, if specific agreements were come to as to what should constitute contraband and as to the limitations of blockade.

#### GERMAN DIPLOMACY MILITARY

At a glance it is clear that Germany was simply undertaking to promote her own warlike enterprise. Her open and avowed enemy was England (though England refused to recognise it), or, specifically, the English fleet. If she could have accomplished the result that no goods save munitions should be contraband and that there should be no captures

at sea save of contraband, and if she could have procured the adoption of a strict limitation upon the right of blockade, she would have gone a long way toward neutralising her chief enemy's main power. It must be borne in mind that Germany's diplomacy and diplomatic methods, of which we have now learned a little, did not begin on August 1, 1914. Our instructions in 1899 to our Hague delegates might on close investigation be found not to have been wholly uninfluenced by Germany's efforts, and it is instructive to note that those nations which Germany expected to stand primarily in the way of her world aggression—Great Britain, France, and Russia—were fully advised of the intent and purpose of the proposals and voted against them.

## MAHAN'S SYNOPSIS OF THE DECISIVE EVENTS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

THE question transmitted to me through Taylor is one on which my knowledge is less extensive and precise than you have imagined. I have not time to supply these deficiencies by any elaborate study, and in giving my reply I will accompany it with a brief analysis, which may enable your friends to test its value for themselves.

The struggle between the North and the South was that of a much stronger party against a weaker ; the latter, however, was in possession, and, as in most cases of conflict in arms, had the usual advantages of the defense, in positions assumed more or less deliberately, and strengthened by fortifications.

Again, not only was there an original disparity of strength, but the North's control of the water enabled it to shut off the South from external support. The North, therefore, not only possessed the superior original strength, but the potentiality of indefinite renewal. This showed itself chiefly in finance, in the superior staying money power of the North, also in facility for providing warlike stores. This summarises the significance of the blockade.

Under these conditions of force, the southern front of operations extended—roughly stated—from the Atlantic

seaboard by the Potomac and Ohio Rivers to the Rio Grande. There the South stood on the defense, and against this line the North moved in force much superior, but at the first not so decisively so. The weak part of the Southern position was its being traversed in the west—their left—by the Mississippi; weak, because the water potentialities of the North far exceeded theirs. On their right they were similarly, but not so decisively weak; for there their right flank rested on the sea, and was also open to the water power of the North, and did continually receive weakening flank attacks.

The Northern plan of operations, as summarised in history, was to move against both flanks; not till very late in the war was the movement upon the Southern centre. But in the west the great movement was made, for there the attack was not so much on the flank itself, but upon the point where flank and centre met; the aim—as historically shown, rather than in the consciousness of the day—being to turn the flank, and at the same time cut off and put out of action the Southern extreme left.

Accepting this analysis, the year 1860 passed without decisive or even very significant incident.

In 1862 Farragut entered the Mississippi, and in April captured New Orleans. The army and navy moved from the Upper Mississippi; and the naval incidents of Fort Henry and Memphis, combined with the military events of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and whatever further advance the army made after that battle, were the decisive features. In the east the Peninsula campaign, Pope's fiascos about Manassas, the battle of Antietam, taken all together, were simply the swaying back and forth of combatants as yet substantially equal, i.e. taking into account commanders. Much bloodshed, but a drawn strife. The subsequent affairs of Fredericksburg (1862) and Chancellorsville (1863) fall in the same category.

The really representative scenes in this year were, I should say, the capture of New Orleans and the surrender of Donelson. The latter may not have been the most decisive, but it was the most dramatic occurrence.

In 1863, the same attempts were renewed. The North succeeded in driving its way through the Mississippi; of this

Farragut's passage of Port Hudson and the surrender of Vicksburg are, in my judgment, the representative events. On the east at Chancellorsville we renewed our flank attack, but the great event of the year was the offensive return by Lee, which ended in repulse at Gettysburg. This was a decisive event, for it demonstrated that the South had not the strength to act offensively on our flank; while it was equally clear that the North had power so to act on the west. These coincident facts made this the decisive year.

For 1863 then, in my judgment, Port Hudson, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg are the representative occurrences.

In 1864, the leading operations are Grant's Wilderness Campaign and Sherman's advance upon Atlanta, followed by the march through Georgia. The latter operation succeeded a great deal of hard fighting in 1862 and 1863, done in reaching and controlling Sherman's initial point, in the neighbourhood of Chattanooga. This antecedent fighting had the characteristic which I noted before concerning events in the east in 1862; there was varied fortune, swinging back and forth, much bloodshed, no decisive issue, though upon the whole the North had gained and did advance. In these years, 1862 and 1863, the scene of struggle was the Confederate centre; but our success in the latter year on the Mississippi made it, in 1864, more nearly the Confederate left. Sherman's success again turned the Confederate flank, while at the same time lopping many a considerable fragment. Of his campaign Atlanta is the representative name. Its capture ended the serious fighting, and from it began his easy triumphal march.

I confess myself unable to point to a decisive incident in Grant's campaign of 1864; but of course Lee's surrender at Appomattax is the dramatic finale of the conflict.

If there should be any disposition to recognise the blockade's part in the result, the two battles of Port Royal and Mobile appear to me to represent its action; for the ultimate effort of the blockade was to assert itself by holding the harbours. Of these endeavors Port Royal was the first—barring Hatteras, a much less important affair—and Mobile the last.

From the purely military standpoint Vicksburg and

Gettysburg were the decisive battles. The former actually decided the fate of the Mississippi. Gettysburg did not so much decide events as prove a decisive fact, viz. that the South was unable to carry out an offensive return.

Politically, New Orleans was the most decisive battle. Foreign intervention was until then, I believe, possible; from that time it was hopeless.

My list then in order of importance would stand: Vicksburg, New Orleans, Gettysburg, Port Hudson (naval), Donelson, Port Royal, Atlanta, Mobile, Appomattax. There are nine. Of these to eliminate I should take away Port Royal; because though more important than Mobile, it is less well known and less dramatic.

I must add that I think my detailed knowledge so defective that I may very well have overlooked some incident, intrinsically small, actually more decisive than bigger affairs. I believe, however, that my analysis, in its leading lines, is fairly correct, and that somewhere on these lines the decisive events are to be found, even though my solution be open to criticism.

A. T. M.

### MAHAN'S VIEWS ON FEMALE SUFFRAGE

It has been said that, owing to Great Britain having no written constitution as a check upon the powers of her legislature, there is nothing which Parliament cannot do, except to make a woman a man. To define this object as the end of the suffrage movement would probably be called a caricature; yet a moment's reflection will show that it is true, in the sense of breaking down and removing for ever the line of demarcation, which the general sense of the world and the course of history have drawn, as the barrier separating the respective spheres of men and women. It is obvious that the movement cannot stop with the mere grant of the vote; that inevitably it goes on to the full entrance of women upon the whole field of political activity; upon the legislative field, from the National Congress down, and upon the Executive, from the President of the United States to the smallest political office in the gift of the Government.

This is not to establish merely equality of consideration,

upon which so much argument is wasted, with the implication that the withholding of suffrage is an imputation of the inferiority of women to men. The result, stated above as inevitable, if the vote be at once attained, is not equality in any sense, but identity of social function between women and men. It means that women shall no longer concentrate their ambitions and affections upon the home, the children, and all the sacred relationships attaching to their work, but shall disperse their energy and modify their characters and entire personality as a sex, by entering upon the outside hurly-burly of masculine life.

The question before us, then, is whether it is, or can be, good for the community to sacrifice, wholly or even in great measure, the special social function of women which throughout the Christian era has been hers in the Christian household. The equality of the sexes has been in the teaching of Christianity from the beginning; and nowhere else than where Christianity enters has that equality been found; because women have neither the physical nor the moral energy to compel it by brute force. But Christianity—which is the corner-stone of European civilisation—while inculcating equality, emphasises differentiations and denies identity of function. Such identity is the end of the present woman's movement. It promises and is already accompanied by a lessening esteem for home and children. Is it probably for the good of the community? The true test to be applied to every social and political demand is the good of the community; not the gratification of a very small section of it. Is it expedient for the welfare of the community that women should have the ballot? Here we must recognise and remember that we face a far-reaching proposition. You cannot stop with the vote. There follows necessarily the full range of all the political activities. These at present are confined to men. Will it be to the advantage of the community—of the State—that women enter this arena also? Are political activities so consonant to women's sphere as to make this advisable? Or is it more probable that as actually men superintend all the commercial and business activities, all that constitutes the prosperity and order of the State, to them also should be confined the

political action which regulates business, commerce, transport, manufactures ?

With these consequences in view, to give women the vote breaks down the constant practice of the past ages by which to men are assigned the outdoor rough action of life and to women that indoor sphere which we call the family. There is no drawing a line here other than that of sex. Remove that barrier as is proposed and you reverse what has heretofore been fundamental in our society.

A. T. M.

### ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

MESSAGE sent to the Prime Minister of England, Mr. David Lloyd George, by distinguished representatives of the three foremost patriotic Societies of America, *The Society of the Cincinnati*, *The Sons of the Revolution*, and *The Sons of the American Revolution*, on the fourth anniversary of Great Britain's entrance into the war, August 4, 1918 :

*"Desiring through you to assure the Government and people of Great Britain, on this fourth anniversary of their entrance into the great war, of the sincere regard and affection entertained for your nation by members of the Society of the Cincinnati (formed by General Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette from the officers of the Continental Army) and by members of the patriotic ancestral Societies of the Sons of the Revolution and Sons of the American Revolution, whose membership is composed exclusively of those whose forefathers fought in the Revolutionary War under General Washington ; we, here to-day on August 4 in Fraunces Tavern, New York City, where General Washington as Commander-in-Chief held the farewell reception to his officers, preparatory to his retirement to private life, have signed our names to this paper to testify to the fact of our highest appreciation of the noble efforts and heroic self-sacrifice of your valiant soldiers and sailors, and to state that as July 4 is our 'Independence Day,' so August 4 will ever be held sacred by us as 'Dependence Day' in honor of the great mother-land which drew her sword without hesitation for the cause of Belgium and world freedom, to show that treaties once made must be kept, and that perfect dependence could be placed upon her to keep her plighted troth."*

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## CHRONOLOGY

1840. September 27, Alfred Thayer Mahan born at West Point, New York, son of Professor Dennis Hart Mahan of the U.S. Military Academy.
- 1854-1856. Columbia College.
1856. September 30, entered the third class, U.S. Naval Academy, as Acting Midshipman. Appointed from the 10th Congressional District of New York.
1859. June 9, graduated as Midshipman.
- 1859-1861. Frigate *Congress*, Brazil station.
1861. August 31, promoted to Lieutenant. Converted steamer *James Adger* for ten days.
- 1861-1862. Steam corvette *Pocahontas*, in the Potomac flotilla ; capture of Port Royal, November 7, 1861 ; South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.
- 1862-1863. Naval Academy at Newport, Rhode Island. First Lieutenant in the *Macedonian* during the summer practice cruise to England in 1863.
- 1863-1864. Steam corvette *Seminole*, West Gulf Blockading Squadron.
- 1864-1865. *James Adger* ; staff of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.
- 1865-1866. Double-ender *Muscoota*.
1865. June 7, promoted to Lieutenant-Commander. |
1866. Ordnance duty, Washington Navy Yard.
- 1867-1869. Steam sloop *Iroquois*, to Asiatic station, via Cape of Good Hope. Detached in 1869 ; returned via India, Rome, and Paris.
1869. Commanding gunboat *Aroostook*, Asiatic station.
- 1870-1871. Navy Yard, New York.
1871. *Worcester*, home station.
1872. Promoted to Commander. Receiving ship, New York.

- 1873-1874. Commanding side-wheel steamer *Wasp* in the Rio de la Plata.
- 1875-1876. Navy Yard, Boston.
- 1877-1880. Naval Academy, Annapolis.
- 1880-1883. Navy Yard, New York.
- 1883-1885. Commanding steam sloop *Wachusett*, South Pacific Squadron.
1885. Promoted to Captain. Assigned to Naval War College, as Lecturer on Naval History and Strategy.
- 1886-1889. President of Naval War College.
- 1889-1892. Special duty, Bureau of Navigation. Member of Commission to choose site for navy yard in Puget Sound.
- 1892-1893. President of Naval War College.
- 1893-1895. Commanding cruiser *Chicago*, flagship of Rear-Admiral Erben, European station.
1894. D.C.L., Oxford; LL.D., Cambridge.
- 1895-1896. Special duty at the Naval War College. LL.D., Harvard.
1896. November 17, retired as Captain on his own application after forty years' service.
- 1896-1912. Special duty in connection with Naval War College.
1897. LL.D., Yale.
1898. Member of Naval War Board during Spanish-American War.
1899. Delegate to Hague Peace Conference.
1900. LL.D., Columbia.
1902. President of the American Historical Association.
1903. LL.D., Dartmouth.
1906. June 29, Rear-Admiral on the retired list.
1908. Appointed by President Roosevelt a member of the Commission to report on the reorganisation of the Navy Department; Chairman of a joint Commission on Naval Affairs; and a member of a Subcommittee on Department Methods.
1909. LL.D., Magill.
1914. December 1, died at the Naval Hospital, Washington.



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